

# WILD WEST



A MAGAZINE CONTAINING STORIES, SKETCHES Etc. OF WESTERN LIFE.

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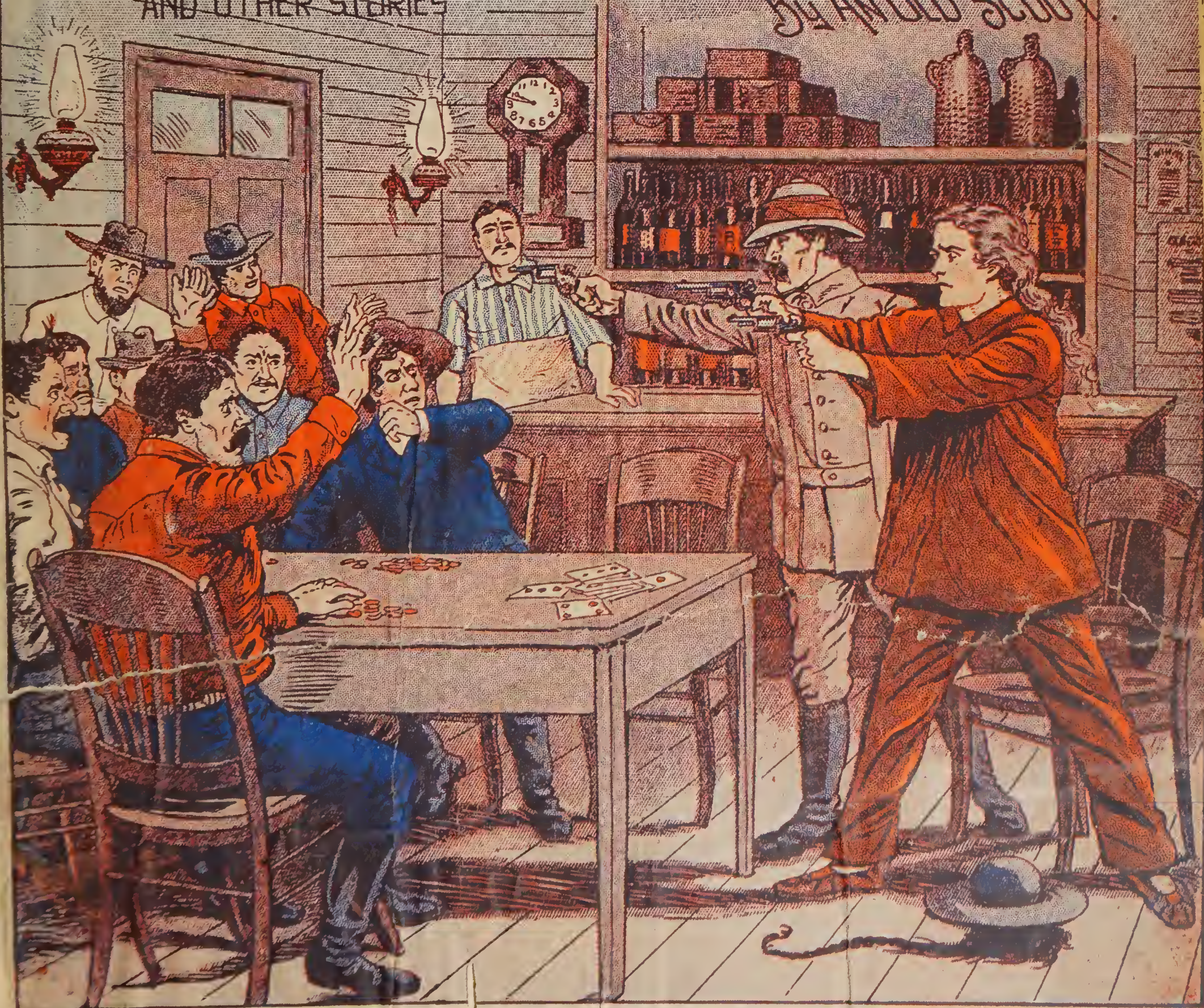
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## YOUNG WILD WEST'S PLUCK;

### OR, BOUND TO BEAT THE "BAD" MEN

AND OTHER STORIES

By AROLD SCOUT



A hoarse murmur of astonishment went up from all hands. It was the ace of hearts! "Who are you, anyhow?" cried Sharp in a rage. "Young Wild West, at your pleasure!" and off went the headgear and pig-tail disclosing the daring young fellow's features to the gamblers.







# WILD WEST WEEKLY

*A Magazine Containing Stories, Sketches, Etc., of Western Life*

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## YOUNG WILD WEST'S PLUCK

— OR —

### BOUND TO BEAT THE "BAD" MEN

By AN OLD SCOUT

#### CHAPTER I.

##### "BUSTING" A SHOW.

"Whoopee! whoopee! Here yer go, ladies an' gents! Ther only original New York show direct from ther East. Step in! It only costs yer half a dollar to see ther beautiful performance. Tickets, sir?"

The scene was on the main street of Weston, a hustling mining town in the mountains of Wyoming. The time was in the early seventies.

Young Wild West, prince of the saddle, dead shot and wealthy mine owner, was walking down the street with his three close friends, Cheyenne Charlie, Jim Dart and Jack Robedee.

They paused in front of the medium-sized tent that had been erected that morning on a vacant lot in the heart of the town, and stood listening to the barker who was trying to drum up trade for the afternoon performance of the show.

"What do you say if we go in and see the show?" said Wild to his companions. "It is now nearly a month since anything has occurred to stir a fellow up. The show might do us good, and if we find it is all right, we can bring the women folks to-night."

"I'm agreeable," replied Cheyenne Charlie, as he drew his tall form to its full height and adjusted the broad-brimmed hat he wore.

"If yer think there will be anything in there to stir us up, we'll take it in," spoke up Jack Robedee.

"It isn't likely that it will be as exciting as it was the night we broke up the band of road agents," observed Dart, as he walked up to the ticket-seller and handed him two dollars for four tickets, thus getting in ahead of Young Wild West.

"All right, Jim, you can pay the way if you want to. I have no objections," exclaimed Wild, with a laugh.

By this time a large crowd had gathered about the tent, and the tickets began to go like hot cakes.

Young Wild West held a very high place in the hearts of the residents of Weston, and when the people saw that he was going to take in the show they thought it must be a pretty good one.

There were only a few inside when Wild and his friends got in and took their seats.

There were seats enough for the entire population of Weston, so there was no danger of being crowded.

A small stage was erected in one end of the tent and a curtain, bearing an alleged picture of the City Hall in New York, hung down to where the footlights ought to have been.

Rough as the picture was, Cheyenne Charlie said it was worth fifty cents to see that alone, and he was glad they had come in.

"You have never been to a real city, then?" asked Wild. "No, but I expect to go some time. My! but that New York must be a great place!"

"I was there lots of times when I was a boy," put in Jack Robedee. "It's a place that's so big that you are liable to get lost in it afore yer go very far."

"I have never been there," said Wild; "but I have read a little about it."

"That is my case," added Jim.

The place now began to fill up, and in twenty minutes half the seats were taken.

Pretty soon the curtain rolled up, and the orchestra, which consisted of a violin and banjo, struck up.

This delighted the rough residents of Weston more than ever, and they applauded roundly when the prelude was ended.

Then a man, wearing a very low-cut vest and sporting a huge imitation diamond in his shirt front, came out and announced that the first on the programme would be a clog dance by the champion of all the cities east of the Allegheny Mountains.

A great many in the audience had never heard of any such mountains, but that made no difference. They wanted to see the clog dancer.

He came out, wearing a spangled suit and a pair of shoes with wooden soles and bells on the heels.

The miners gave him an ovation, and he bowed right and left.

The musicians started up a lively tune, and the dancer began to execute the steps he knew.

He was a pretty fair one at the business, and the audience was satisfied to a man.

After he had responded to the encore and retired, the announcer stated that Miss Rosalie Maybird would sing for them.

When a big, over-fat woman of forty came tripping out in a gorgeous costume, a blond wig on her head and her face thickly smeared with paint and powder, the miners cheered as loud as though she had been sixteen and not a false thing about her.

The singer's voice had seen better days, but that made no difference, either. A woman was a woman, in their estimation, and she was bound to get a hand in Weston.

"Mollie Darling" set the miners in ecstasies, and "The Last Rose of Summer" fairly raised the majority of them off their seats.

The next to appear was a team of Irish comedians. As might be supposed, this sort of amusement kept the audience in good humor.

After this act a trapeze was lowered from the flies, and



When the announcement was made that Mlle. Eloise Gardner could appear in her thrilling trapeze act.

There was a short delay then, during which angry voices could be heard from behind the curtains.

Our friends caught the sound of a female voice raised in protestation, and instantly they were all attention.

This was followed by an oath from a man, and then a slender girl of sixteen, attired in the regulation costume of such performers, came out into view of the audience.

She was very pale but beautiful as a lily, so the majority of the miners thought.

Young Wild West and his friends came to the conclusion at the very start that the girl was sick and was going to do her act against her will.

There was a great contrast between this performer and the female who had preceded her.

There was no paint or powder or false hair here.

"By Jove!" whispered Jim Dart to Wild, "that is about the best-looking girl I ever set eyes on! It is a pity she is in that business."

"A person can be in that business and be just as respectable as they kin in any other business," observed Jack Robedee.

"That is true," said Young Wild West. "Perhaps the young lady is not a trapeze performer from choice. She might be compelled to follow that profession by her parents. You know how show people bring up their children in that way, nine cases out of ten."

By this time the man with the huge sparkler in his shirt front had thrown a stout ribbon over the bar of the trapeze, and when he had thrown the two ends to the girl, she climbed limply upward and swung herself upon the bar in a sitting posture.

Her face turned very red at this exertion, and our friends could see that her arms were trembling slightly.

"The girl is certainly sick," said Jim. "I don't think that she ought to be allowed to go on with the act."

"You can't tell anything about these kind of people," spoke up Cheyenne Charlie. "Maybe she's puttin' it on jest to make it look more dangerous what she's goin' to do."

But a minute later it became plain to almost every one that the girl was sick.

The man on the stage motioned repeatedly for her to proceed, but she sat still upon the trapeze, holding on much the same as a novice would have done.

Her face was now deathly pale, the redness having left it almost instantly.

There was no net beneath the trapeze, and it was at least twelve feet above the stage.

"She is going to fall!" exclaimed Young Wild West, springing to his feet.

The four were seated in the third row from the stage, and Jim Dart had the seat next to the aisle.

As the words left the lips of Wild, Jim made a leap for the stage and was on it in a jiffy.

He had not yet gained an upright position when the girl, with a gasping cry, let go the ropes and fell over backward.

Down she came with sickening force, the showman beneath her not making the least move to catch her!

But Jim Dart was there!

He very neatly caught her in his arms, though the force of the fall knocked him down.

As he was struggling to his feet again the man rushed over and seized the fainting girl roughly by the arm.

"Get up there!" he exclaimed, with an oath. "You can't work no such game as this on me!"

At this juncture the performer opened her eyes and, clutching Jim tightly about the neck, exclaimed:

"Oh, save me! I can't go up there again. I am too dizzy."

"I'll see that you don't, miss," was the young fellow's quick reply.

"You get off the stage, you infernal meddler!" cried the man, turning to Jim. "You have got no right here."

"Haven't I, though? Well, I think I have."

"Get off, I say. That girl is my daughter, and I'll make her do as I say."

"I am not his daughter," protested the girl. "Take me away from him. I never want to see him again!"

By this time every man in the audience was on his feet.

Young Wild West stepped forward and leaped upon the stage just as four men belonging to the company came from behind the scenes.

The man with the paste diamond in his shirt was the manager, and he was bound to show his authority.

He drew a revolver as Wild got upon the stage.

"Get off!" he shouted. "Get off, or by the eternal I'll riddle the pair of you with bullets!"

"Drop that!" commanded Young Wild West, flashing his own revolver under the fellow's nose with a quickness that even astonished the miners in the audience.

Thud!

The weapon instantly dropped from the showman's hand.

He saw that he had struck more than he bargained for.

"Miss," said Wild, turning to the pretty trapeze performer, "did you say you never wanted to see this man again?"

"Yes," was the quick reply. "Take me away from him. He is not my father. He has forced me to perform in his show for the past five years. I don't know who or where my parents are, but I know he is not my father."

"That settles it, then. Jim, take her off the stage and take her over to the house and place her under the care of Arietta and Anna. We won't tolerate any such work as this out here in Weston."

At this speech a deafening cheer went up from the audience.

It was plain that the miners sided with Young Wild West to a man.

The show people stood still where they had stopped when Wild made the manager drop his revolver.

They were a pretty badly frightened lot.

"There is only one thing you can do," observed Wild, turning to the angered scoundrel, "and that is, prove that the girl is your daughter. Even if you do that, I want you to understand that she shan't perform when she is ill."

"I can't see why you should interfere," was the surly rejoinder.

"Oh, we have a way of standing up for what is right out here, haven't we, men?"

A chorus of mixed replies, such as "Yes!" "Right you are!" and "That's what's ther matter!" came from the miners.

When the noise had ceased for a moment the showman turned to the audience and shouted:

"You are the worst lot of loafers I ever met! You all ought to be tarred and feathered for this. The show shan't go on, and there will be no money refunded."

This was where the fellow made a very bad break.

The rough men, many of whom were of the most reckless type, became angered.

"Let's bust up ther blamed old show!" exclaimed one.

"That's it!" was the answering cry.

Young Wild West strove to pacify them, but could not make himself heard.

He jumped down from the stage, and then the angry audience proceeded to demolish things. As many as could scrambled upon the stage and began ripping the alleged scenery right and left.

The curtain was torn down, and they began dancing on the picture of New York's City Hall.

"Let's get out of here," said Wild to Jack and Cheyenne Charlie. "We can do nothing to stop them. The show is doomed."

They left the tent and went around to the stage entrance.

The show people were just coming out, nearly frightened out of their wits.

They had grabbed their belongings and were trying to reach the hotel they were putting up at.

"This way!" cried Young Wild West. "We will see that you are not hurt, but you may as well bid good-by to your show. The people won't stand your way of doing business. Hurry, now!"

The company—about ten in all—were safely escorted to Brown's Gazoo, and just as they got there a burst of flame and smoke went upward.

The miners had got into a real playful mood and had set the tent on fire.

It was the quickest "busting" of a show on record!

Wild and his two companions watched the blaze until it was about over, and then they made their way to the Murdock residence.

They found the pretty trapeze performer seated in the "best room" with Arietta, Young Wild West's sweetheart; Cheyenne Charlie's wife, Anna, and the wife of Dove-Eye Dave.

The girl had recovered somewhat, but still seemed to be frightened.

Jim Dart came in just as his friends arrived.

He had heard the story of Mlle. Eloise Gardner, and he told it to them.

The girl had been stolen from a farmer in Ohio, who had adopted her from a public institution.

She was scarcely eleven years old at the time, and as the



show people treated her much better than the farmer had done, she was reconciled to the change.

She was taught to perform on the trapeze and soon became an expert.

Joel Banks was the name of the showman who had taken her in charge, and though he had been rather indifferent, his wife was very kind to the girl.

But when the wife died, about a year before the arrival of the show at Weston, things took a change.

Joel Banks began to act very cruelly toward his star performer.

It seemed that she could not do enough to please him.

She had been longing to get away from him forever, but could not pluck up sufficient courage to run away.

The time to get out of the show business had come very suddenly to her, and she had accepted the opportunity.

She was glad that she had at last fallen into the hands of real friends.

But her illness and the excitement she had passed through that day was too much for the frail Eloise.

She was taken down with a fever that night.

But she was in good hands, and if careful nursing would do any good she was bound to come out of it.

Jim Dart was interested in her more than any one else.

He felt that he had met his fate, and he longed for her to get well so he might tell her that he loved her.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE DANCE IN THE BARBER SHOP.

The show people remained pretty close the rest of the day and night following the burning of the tent.

Evidently they realized that they had struck a place where they could not do as they pleased.

The next morning, however, Joel Banks, the owner, came over to the office of the Wild West Mining and Improvement Company and asked for Young Wild West.

Wild had not got around yet, so he was sent for.

He was not much surprised when he heard who it was that wanted to see him.

When he got to the office he found Banks seated on a chair, apparently taking things very easy.

"Well, sir," observed Wild, "what can I do for you?"

"I came over to see if you were going to pay me for the damage done to me yesterday," was the reply.

"Certainly not."

"It was you who incited the men to burn the tent," went on the showman, quietly and in a business-like way: "therefore I expect you to pay for a new tent and the other things that were destroyed."

"You are mistaken, sir," replied Wild. "It was not I who incited the men; it was yourself. But let it be as it may. I am not going to pay you anything. If you are wise, you will be thankful for getting out as lucky as you did."

"If you do not pay me, you will be sorry for it."

"See here, Mr. Showman, if you don't take back that threat, I will be obliged to throw you out of this office."

"I never take anything back."

"You don't, eh? Well, out you go, then!" And with a sudden motion Wild clutched the fellow by the collar and catching his back with his knee, sent him tumbling heels over head through the doorway and down the two steps outside.

"I'll take it back," said Banks, as he got upon his feet and brushed himself off. "I didn't think you would do what you said."

"If you stay around here long enough you'll find that I always do exactly as I say I will," retorted Wild, who was as cool as a cucumber and laughing.

"You are the greatest young fellow I ever met," and with that the showman walked off in the direction of the place where he was stopping.

"I guess that sort of surprised that fellow," observed our hero, turning to Jim Dart, who was at a desk, busy with the books of the company.

"I should say it did," was the reply. "My! but didn't you do that quick?"

"A fellow has got to be quick if he wants to get through this world in the proper shape."

"That's right, but you must remember that there are very few fellows like you in this world. I never saw any one who could equal you yet."

"Nonsense. Don't flatter me, Jim."

"But I mean it. You know I never flatter any one."

"Well, all right, then. Let it go at that. The first time I was ever told that there was only one in the world like me was when I was going to a public school down in the southern part of Missouri. It was a Friday afternoon, and the usual weekly spelling match was under way.

"The boys used to stand in a line on one side of the room and the girls on the other. Then the teacher used to give out words from the regular spelling book used in the school. When a scholar missed, he sat down and was out of the match.

"On the day I am speaking of the spelling-match started at half-past one and did not wind up till five o'clock."

"Who was the winner?" asked Jim, becoming very much interested.

"I am coming to that. You see, the thing finally drifted down to a girl named Jennie Spruck and myself. Jennie was about three years older than I and was considered the smartest scholar in the school. She was a favorite of the teacher's too, and I was not. That made the spelling-match more interesting.

"When it got along pretty close to five o'clock Jennie and I were standing up yet, and the teacher was looking at her watch about every five minutes. She was getting tired and wanted to go home the worst way.

"She had been trying us on the hard words in the book and we went right on without a miss. Pretty soon she began to give us some of the easy ones, and we both smiled at her.

"We went right along for a dozen words apiece, and then the word 'hoping' was given to Jennie. 'H-o-p-e-i-n-g,' she said, and the teacher nodded and looked at her watch again. Then she turned to give me a word, and I told her that Jennie had missed.

"She got her to spell it over again, and then said it was correct. I said it wasn't. So the dictionary was brought out, and I proved that I was right. The teacher then told me not to say anything about it, as she did not want the circumstance to reach the ears of the trustees, and when I told her that it was not a good plan to trust 'e's, especially in a word like hoping, she got mad and boxed my ears.

"But after she dismissed school, she came to me and apologized, winding up with the words: 'Wild, there is only one person in the world like you, and that is old Noah Webster, the man who wrote the dictionary.'

Jim laughed heartily at the conclusion of Wild's little story, and admitted that he always thought the letter e was in the word hoping.

After a while Wild left the office and walked over to the mine that was owned by Cheyenne Charlie, Jim, Jack and himself.

The place was in great shape now, and it was panning out more to the ton than any other piece of property in Weston.

The partners were pretty rich young fellows.

Wild had not been there long when Arietta came along, mounted on her horse.

"I have come over to ask a favor of you, Wild," she said as she came to a halt.

"What is it, little one?"

"I want you to go over to Spondulicks with me."

"All right, Et; I'll go with you."

"There is a store over there, you know, where you can buy lots of things that can't be bought here."

"Wait till I get Spitfire, and we will be off."

In a few minutes Young Wild West showed up, riding a handsome sorrel.

"It took you a long time, it seems," pouted the pretty maiden.

"Oh, I don't know. I had to comb out Spitfire's mane a little. I didn't want to ride along with you unless my horse was in as good shape as yours."

"I believe you think more of your horse than you do of me."

"No, I don't, Et; I think more of you than I do of anything living, but next to you comes my horse. He saved the lives of us both once when he leaped over a chasm that no other horse could have done, you know."

"Yes, I know. I am satisfied with what you say. Now let us go on, as I want to get there and back as soon as possible."

"Have you got your shooter with you?" asked Wild.

"Oh, yes. I never go out without it." And Arietta pulled a handsome silver-mounted Colt's revolver from her belt, which had been hidden by her fancy riding-jacket.

"That's right, little one. There are no road agents to bother us any more, but you can never tell how soon you will run into danger out in this wild and unsettled country. A person



out here without a good revolver would be like a stranger in New York without a cent in his pocket."

"Wild, we ought to go to New York some day. Suppose we go there when we—"

Arietta hesitated.

"When we get married. Is that it?" asked Wild.

"I— I suppose so," was the blushing reply.

"That will be about three years from now, according to the agreement we made."

"Well, that will be plenty time enough. We will both be old enough to know what we are doing then."

"Suppose you should meet some fellow you liked better than me before that time?"

"Suppose you should meet a girl you like better than me?"

"Et, the girl isn't born yet that I could like half as well as you."

"Nor there never was and never will be a fellow like you."

The two were riding close together during this conversation, and after something like a smack had sounded they both laughed cheerily and urged their steeds forward at a faster gait.

It was a case of courting on horseback.

When they rode along by the deserted haunt of a once terrifying band of road agents, Young Wild West could not help but come to a halt and take a look at the surroundings.

The piece of canvas which had been painted in such excellent imitation of the solid rock was no longer there, and the entrance to their hidden cave was in plain view.

Wild spoke of the thrilling experiences he had had there, and then they rode on.

The ride to Spondulicks was a pleasant one, and when they once got there they concluded to stay a little longer than they had at first intended.

Arietta wanted to do a little shopping, so after a while Wild left her in the biggest dry goods store in the place and went over to a barber shop, telling her to stay there till he came for her.

The young prince of the saddle did not have any beard to speak of, but he wanted to shave so he could get a mustache started.

He envied the adornment of the upper lip that Cheyenne Charlie possessed.

The barber shop was a typical Western one. There was only one barber and a chair that had seen better days.

The barber himself looked more like a cattle raiser than he did like a knight of the razor.

Wild struck it just right, for a customer was just leaving the chair as he entered.

Wild hung his hat on a nail in the wall and took his place in the chair.

"Shave?" said the barber.

"Yes. I don't know as I exactly need one, but I came in from Weston this morning, and thought I might as well spend half a dollar with you while I was here."

"That's right." And the man proceeded to do the job, talking at a two-forty gait, as most barbers do, meanwhile.

The shaving was soon over, and then Wild sat up in the chair while his hair was being combed.

The boy had a fine head of hair. It was as long as a woman's and curled slightly on the ends.

Two men entered the shop while the tresses were being combed out.

One of them stood looking at the barber for a moment and, then turning to Wild suddenly, said:

"Young feller, why don't you get that hair cut off?"

"Oh, I don't know," was the reply. "I guess I'd rather have it on."

"It's a foolish notion. I suppose you wear it that way to try and imitate some of the bum Indian fighters and scouts who have made reputations just because they were lucky enough to have some fool of a story writer come along and get them in print. I never saw a long-haired man yet who wasn't more or less of a make-believe."

"Have you been around this part of the country long?" asked Young Wild West, as he got out of the chair and handed the barber half a dollar.

"Long enough to know the people raised here, I reckon."

"Oh! I did not know that. I thought you were a stranger here. Well, I have never had my hair cut since I was a little boy, so I think I will let it grow for a while yet. I am not trying to imitate anybody by doing it, either. Good-day, gentlemen."

"Seems to be pretty 'soon' for a boy," remarked the other man, speaking for the first time.

"You people talk as though you were from the East," retorted Wild.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed both men in unison.

"Being that you think I am pretty 'soon,' I am going to give you a little advice," went on the boy, who was now quite sure that the men were trying to have some fun at his expense. "You don't have to take it, but I will give it to you, notwithstanding."

"Well, what is the advice you want to give us?" asked the one who had spoken first.

"Don't try to have fun with every one you meet; that's the advice I want to give you."

Again they laughed.

"You seem to be rather spunky. Now, you take my advice and don't fool with men," observed one of them.

"I always mind my own business, my dear sir."

"Then go out and mind it."

"Suppose I don't go out?"

"Oh, well, I'll throw you out, then. I think you deserve something of the sort."

"See here!" and Young Wild West, not a little angered, walked over to the men. "Do you know what I think you fellows are? You are a pair of bluffers. You wouldn't try to have fun with me if I were a little older. I'll tell you what I'll do with you. I'll bet the pair of you a hundred dollars that you are both rank cowards!"

"What!" was the angry rejoinder, and the man who had done the most of the talking made a slap at Wild's face, but missed it by several inches.

"Didn't you understand what I said?" the boy asked, not noticing the move made to strike him.

"Did you mean that, young fellow?" asked the other, putting his hand in his pocket. "If you do, you have barked up the wrong tree. I am a professional gambler, and I never took water on a bet yet."

Young Wild West counted out a hundred dollars and placed it in the barber's hands.

"Money talks," was all he said.

The man seemed surprised at this action, but he quickly covered the money.

"Now, how are you going to prove that we are cowards?" he questioned.

"Easy enough. I am going to make you own up to it."

Wild's easy-going manner caused the two men to become slightly uneasy.

One of them placed his hand on his hip pocket.

"Pull out your gun," said Wild, calmly. "Let us see what it looks like. Is it loaded?"

Then as quick as a flash he drew his own revolvers.

Leveling them at the feet of the two men, he resumed:

"Now, when I count three, I want you fellows to dance. I'll keep time for you. Are you ready?"

There was no reply, but both men drew their revolvers.

Of course they could not have done this if Wild had not been disposed to let them.

He felt that they were a pair of harmless cowards, and it struck him to give them a warming up, and at the same time give the barber something to tell his customers about when they came in to get shaved.

"Drop your shooters!"

The command was uttered in a ringing tone, and without waiting an instant the men obeyed.

"Now, get ready to dance!"

The men looked at each other appealingly.

"One!"

The barber, who was used to all sorts of life, had a broad grin on his face.

"Two!"

The uneasy pair shuffled their feet preparatory to dancing.

"Three!"

Off they started without the least hesitation.

Then Young Wild West began to shoot apparently at their feet, though in reality he was simply making a sieve out of the barber's floor.

"Dance, you cowards, dance!" called out Wild.

They now began yelling from sheer fright, but they jumped high into the air in their efforts to keep out of the way of the bullets.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE GAMBLERS.

Crack-crack! crack-crack!

Young Wild West kept right on firing until he only had one shot left.



The two men were frightened out of their wits or nearly so by this time, and a big crowd, attracted by the shooting, had collected outside the door of the barber shop.

"Stop!" exclaimed the boy, as he fired the last shot.

The men obeyed.

"I said you were cowards," he continued. "Now, if you are not cowards, why did you let a boy make you drop your shooters after you had drawn them, and then make you dance around like a couple of jumping-jacks. Who wins the money?"

"You do," answered the fellow who made the bet.

"That's right," added the other.

The barber handed the money over to Wild.

"You'll need a couple of new boards for your floor, and it will cost something to put them in," Wild said, and he handed him fifty dollars.

"Thank you—er—Mr.—"

"Young Wild West is my name."

At this the two cowards looked at each other and then nodded, as though it was no wonder that they had been made to dance by a boy.

"We owe you an apology," remarked the one who had lost the bet. "If we had known that you were Young Wild West we would not have said a word to you."

"That's right," added the other. "We are coming over to Weston to do some business, and we don't want to have one of the principal citizens of the place have any hard feelings toward us right at the start."

"Oh, I'll forgive you," laughed Wild. "Just think of the advice I told you a little while ago. If you follow that as you go through the world you will never get into trouble."

"We will after this."

"All right. Good-day, gentlemen," and Young Wild West left the shop, the crowd outside making way for him with astonishing quickness.

Some of them had seen him before, and those who had not were anxious to.

The shooting in the barber shop was regarded as a great joke by the majority, and the fact of Wild having won a hundred dollars and then turned over fifty of it to the barber to pay for the damage he had done to the floor made the young deadshot all the more popular.

Wild made his way to the dry goods store with a crowd of admirers at his heels.

He paid no attention to them whatever, but went right on in, finding Arietta waiting for him.

Their horses were hitched to tie-posts outside and were being looked after by an employee of the store.

When the handsome young couple came out and mounted some one proposed three cheers for Young Wild West, and they were given with a will.

Wild doffed his sombrero right and left and then rode over to the hotel, where he proposed to take dinner.

He was known there by the proprietor, and as soon as he had made known his wants, the cook was ordered to put out the best the house afforded for the couple from Weston.

This hotel was the only one in town that had any kind of a porch for the guests to use, and after their horses had been put up, Wild and Arietta went out and sat down to wait until dinner was ready.

They had not been seated there long when Wild saw three men coming up the street on the other side.

There was nothing strange in this, but as he had seen them all before under rather peculiar circumstances, he could not be anything but interested in them.

Two of them were the fellows he had made dance in the barber shop a short time before and the other was Joel Banks, the showman.

What this man could be doing in Spondulicks he had no idea, but it struck him as being rather strange that he should be in the company of the two cowardly men.

As the trio passed the hotel all three of them looked at him keenly.

None of them cared to tackle him again, it was evident, unless it would be under circumstances that were very favorable to themselves.

The hotel proprietor came out at this moment.

"Do you see those men going along over there?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Well, two of them are the rankest gamblers I ever saw. They have a complete layout—faro, roulette and the whole business."

"They are the fellows who tried to have some fun with me down in the barber shop."

"They are?"

"Yes."

"And you made them dance and won a hundred dollars from them?"

"Yes."

"Why, they have always had the reputation of being a very tough pair in this town. I hear they are going to quit this place and go over to Weston to do business."

"Well, they may not have such luck over there as they have here."

"I don't know. You can't beat a gambling game, you know."

"Not unless you know as much about it as the men who are working it."

"Well, there is a good deal in that, I will admit."

"Well, I'll just say that if those fellows come over to our town and go to do any crooked work they won't remain there a great while. That man with them is the head monk of a show that was put out of business in Weston yesterday afternoon."

"Is that so? The stage-driver was telling us something about it a little while ago. I believe that man came over with him."

"Quite likely. I don't think the fellow had a horse. His name is Joel Banks, and he is a regular scoundrel from start to finish."

"He is in with a good crowd, then, for that is what the gamblers are."

"What are their names?" asked Wild.

"Lev Sharp and Pete Sterling. Sterling was the one nearest the curb when they passed."

"He is the one I took the hundred from."

"Well, he has got lots more. They have made lots of money since they have been in this town."

Just then the dinner bell sounded, so the conversation stopped.

Young Wild West and his blushing sweetheart were the attraction for all eyes when they entered the dining-room.

There were about a dozen guests at the hotel besides them, and they had all heard of the prince of the saddle and dead shot.

It was a very enjoyable meal for all hands, and they lingered long at the table.

Topics of all sorts were discussed, and during the talk our two young friends learned that there was an "Uncle Tom's Cabin" show in town, which was to give its first performance that afternoon.

As Arietta had never been to a show, Wild concluded to take her to it.

"Uncle Tom" was even more popular in those days than he is now, and such a show was bound to make a hit in a place like Spondulicks, where money was almost as free as water.

"We will go and see the show, Et," said Wild. "We won't get home anywhere near the time we expected to, but we'll reach there before dark, though."

"All right, Wild. Whatever you say."

"That's right, little one; let me be the boss."

The girl laughed, knowing well that he only meant half, he said.

The show began at two o'clock, so the bills said, and when that time arrived there was a vast crowd ready to go in.

Wild bought tickets for the best seats he could get and they had an excellent chance to witness the rather crude performance and hear everything that was said.

Arietta was delighted, and when the show let out at four o'clock she said she was sorry that Cheyenne Charlie's wife had not been there to see it.

"It is advertised to stay here two weeks, so I guess she will get a chance to run over and see it before that time," replied our hero.

Ten minutes later the dashing young couple started to return to Weston.

The road was now a pretty good one, as considerable traveling was being done on it, and they could make good time without hurting their horses.

When about half-way home they overtook a team drawing a wagon that contained a heavy load.

Two horsemen were accompanying it, and when Wild saw who they were he loosened his revolvers in his belt.

They were no others than Lev Sharp and Pete Sterling the gamblers!



But that was not all!

On the wagon, beside the driver, was the showman, Joel Banks.

"That is the gambling outfit on the way to our town," said Wild. "That man Banks seems to be interested in it, by the way he acts, and if he is, there is going to be trouble in Weston before many days."

"Don't bother them, Wild. Promise me that you won't," pleaded Arietta.

"Don't worry, Et. I shan't interfere with them unless I am sure they deserve to be interfered with."

"You shouldn't get bad men down on you."

"I know that, but I can't help it. How are you, gentlemen?"

The last sentence was addressed to the gamblers and the showman.

The former returned the salute in an apparently friendly manner, but Banks did not so much as turn his head.

"All right, Mr. Banks," thought Wild. "I must be on the lookout for you. I have got an idea that you are a treacherous fellow."

The rest of the ride was made without anything out of the ordinary happening, and that evening Arietta held her friends and relatives spellbound by telling them what she had seen that afternoon.

Wild did not tell of his adventure in the barber shop until the next morning, and then not until he had pointed out the two men he had made dance.

When he spoke of Banks being with them with the load coming back, Jack Robedee said:

"Why, I heard last night that the showman had bought the piece of property the tent was burned down on yesterday. There's men working there this mornin'. Everybody thinks there is going to be a theater there."

"A funny old theater, I guess," answered Wild. "I'll tell you what will be there—a gambling house."

"What? Faro an' all that sort of thing?" asked Cheyenne Charlie.

"Yes, a regular layout."

"I'll have to pay ther place a visit, sure pop."

"And drop some of your earnings," spoke up Jim.

"Never mind about that part of it."

"Oh, well, we will all take a look inside it when they get things running in full blast," observed Young Wild West.

This seemed to be satisfactory to all hands, so they said no more about the gamblers just then, but started in at the work they had before them for the day.

The piece of property the showman had bought did not belong to the company, but was sold by a private individual, or rather it was leased for a term of years.

If Wild had had anything to do with it, he would probably have made Banks pay more than he did for it, on account of his rascally behavior.

Such a man would certainly not be a benefit to any community.

Wild walked down to the post-office toward evening, and as he passed the newly purchased lot he saw that about a dozen carpenters were at work rushing up a good-sized shanty.

It was to be a two-story structure and was right flush with the sidewalk.

Banks and the two gamblers were there, superintending the work.

Seeing Young Wild West looking on in an interested manner, Pete Sterling came over to him.

"How are you, Mr. West?" said he. "I suppose you have heard that we are going in business here?"

"Yes, I have heard something about it," was the reply of our hero.

"We propose to run an orderly house and work everything on the square—every game to be played in strict accordance with the rules."

"That is the way everything should be worked—on the square," was all Wild had to say.

Then he went down to the post-office to have a chat with Arietta while he waited for the mail to arrive.

She welcomed him with a bright smile, as usual, and they talked together something after the fashion of a pair of lovers.

But after a while she got real serious and said:

"Wild, those three men who are having that building put up over there are going to rig a murder trap in it."

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE GAMBLER'S STORY AND WHAT FOLLOWED.

"What do you mean by that, Et?" asked Young Wild West, surprised at the girl's remark.

"I overheard something this morning while the three men were in here waiting for me to sort out the mail."

"What was it?"

"That they are going to dig a sub-cellar and have a trap-door that will open and tumble any person they wish to get rid of into it!"

"Why, how could they arrange that by using a sub-cellar?"

"I don't know. That's all I could learn. The three men are going to do that part of the work themselves, so that even the men working for them will know nothing of it."

"By jove!" exclaimed Wild. "I will begin to think that I am up against a stiff game pretty soon."

"You shouldn't bother your head with them, Wild."

"And let them keep a murder trap, as you call it, here in Weston? I must bother my head with them, little one."

"I am sorry I told you what I heard, now."

"You may be glad that you did before we get through with these gamblers."

Arietta looked a trifle worried.

"I say, Et," went on Wild, "have you said anything to any one else about this?"

"No."

"Well, don't, then, unless it becomes real necessary. Will you promise me that?"

"Yes, I will promise."

"I am glad that I have learned that they are going to make a murder trap in their den."

"What do you mean for me not to say anything about it, unless it becomes real necessary?" asked Et, as she happened to think that it was a peculiar sort of promise she had made.

"Oh, I don't know. If I should disappear suddenly and was gone any length of time, you might come to the conclusion that I was in the gamblers' sub-cellar and tell the boys about it. They could come and get me out, then."

"Yes, if they didn't kill you when they put you in, or before."

"You know I have always managed to take care of myself, so far, haven't I?"

"Yes," admitted Arietta.

"Well, I am still wearing the charm you made for me."

"Wild, I won't say any more, only——"

"Only I'll take a kiss, for here comes the mail coach, and I won't get a chance if I wait any longer."

Old man Murdock came in just then to help his granddaughter sort over the expected mail, and Wild, not waiting to see if there were any letters for him, went out.

He had his kiss, and he was satisfied.

The stage-coach came to a standstill in front of the post-office as he stepped outside.

There was a full load of passengers, nearly all of whom were strangers.

Young Wild West was a pretty fair sort of a judge as to the character of a man he met, and he proceeded to size the strangers up.

It did not take him half a minute to come to the conclusion that they were a bad lot, for the most part. Those he suspected were dressed flashily in what the miners called "store clothes."

All wore belts and attached to them were holsters, from which the butts of revolvers protruded.

"Gamblers, I'll bet!" muttered Wild to himself. "They have followed the gambling outfit over from Spondulicks, beyond a doubt."

He went over to the house he occupied with two of his partners, and found that Jack Robedee had prepared an excellent supper.

Jim was waiting for him, so they sat down just as Cheyenne Charlie came in.

The cook, who had been with them for a month, had left the day before, and Robedee had undertaken to officiate until they got another.

Jack was pretty good at that sort of business, but, of course, he did not intend to keep it up.

He had too much other business to attend to.

"If our new cook don't show up to-morrow, I think we



had better make arrangements to eat over at the Murdock house for a while," remarked Wild.

"Oh, I guess I kin manage it for a couple of days longer," said Jack. "You said it was a Chinese who was comin', didn't you?"

"Yes, that's the word I got from Denver. He ought to reach here by to-morrow night, if nothing has happened to him."

Wild then told them of the new arrivals, but said nothing of what Arietta had said.

"Suppose we run over to Brown's Gazoo to-night an' see what ther strangers look like?" suggested Cheyenne Charlie.

"Yes, that's a good idea," spoke up Jim.

"It would jist suit me," chimed in Jack.

"Well, if it suits the rest of you, I suppose it must certainly suit me," said Wild, with a smile. "We will go, by all means."

Shortly after dark they locked up the shanty and started out.

Cheyenne Charlie said he had to stop home first and tell his wife where he was going.

"That's what yer git for bein' married," observed Robedee.

No one paid any attention to the remark.

"How is Eloise to-night?" asked Jim.

"She's gittin' better, so Anna says. I guess she'll come out of it all right," was the answer.

"Banks has not been over inquiring for her, has he?" asked Wild.

"No, an' he had better not come. I've learned Anna how to handle a shooter, an' if that skunk comes sneakin' around there, he's liable to git a lead pill."

Jack smiled to himself.

He was quite sure that Jim was in love with the pretty trapeze performer.

"I'm ther only one left, I guess. But I'll stay ther only one, an' don't yer forgit it!" he thought to himself.

The Gazoo was full when they got there, both the barroom and the card rooms.

The strangers were making themselves friendly with the miners, and the drinks were fairly flowing.

Banks was there, too, and shortly after our friends arrived Lev Sharp and Pete Sterling came in.

The gamblers nodded in a very friendly manner to Young Wild West, but Banks did not so much as look at him.

The proprietor noticed this, and knowing that there had been some trouble between them, he shrugged his shoulders uneasily.

Young Wild West did not come in there very often, and when he did come something out of the ordinary always happened.

"What is up, Wild?" Brown asked a minute or so later when he got a good opportunity.

"Nothing. Why?"

"Oh, I thought perhaps you was goin' to make it hot for that show feller. I know you had some trouble with him."

"I shan't bother him so long as he lets me alone," said Wild.

"Well, I don't think he will bother you. He got all the starch taken out of him when you threw him out of the office."

"He is a bad egg."

"That may be, but he is a good spender, and so are those friends of his."

"No doubt they are. They get their money very easily, and can afford to let some of it fly occasionally. What has become of the rest of the show people?"

"They've all gone away 'cept ther feller what blacks up like a nigger an' plays on ther banjo. I reckon he is goin' to stay here with Mr. Banks."

"I suppose you know what that new building is going to be?"

"Yes, I heard what it was."

"There'll be a regular layout there, I understand."

"Yes, I guess so."

"It will be the means of bringing a whole lot of gentlemanly toughs into town. Look at that lot that came over by the stage to-night."

"Oh, I haven't seen anything wrong out of them."

"No, nor no one else yet. But just wait. You will find that those same people are going to make a whole lot of trouble here in town."

"Well, I hope you are wrong; but as you never are, I won't be a bit surprised at anything."

The trouble was coming much sooner than either Wild or the hotel-keeper thought. It was due that very night.

But it was trouble for only one, and that one was Young Wild West.

The gamblers were not as friendly to him as they made out to be.

They had heard all about him, and knew it was not likely that they could work their game there very long.

Young Wild West would certainly put a stop to it.

That very afternoon they had decided to put him out of the way.

And they meant to do it this very night!

When the strangers, who were really in league with the gamblers, came over from Spondulicks they were at once let into the secret.

They were all a bad lot, and murder was not out of their line.

They decided upon just what they proposed to do, and when Wild came down to the Gazoo, all of them felt elated.

It seemed that he was playing right in their hands.

The showman knew all about what was going on, but he was to take no part in the murderous scheme.

This was partly because he was afraid to and partly because he knew he would be the first one to be accused, and unless he was able to prove his innocence right away, he would be hanged.

Banks did not want to be hanged.

The thought of it alone made him tremble.

But let us turn our attention to Young Wild West.

He had not been in the barroom over ten minutes when Pete Sterling led four strangers up and introduced them to him.

They were the ones who had arrived on the evening-stage-coach.

After he had introduced them, the gambler told of the incident in the barber shop over in Spondulicks and laughed heartily over it.

"You see," he went on to his friends, "I didn't know who I was bucking up against, nor Sharp didn't, either. If we had known it was Young Wild West, we would never have thought of trying to guy him. That was the first time I was ever taken down in my life!"

"I was a little astonished when I heard of it," said one of the men. "Why, I remember once when we were at Yuba Creek, you made Wild Bill Hickok take water, Pete."

"Yes, I believe I did," was the rejoinder.

"It was this way," resumed the man, turning to Wild. "It was a four-handed game of euchre, and Pete and I were partners. Wild Bill and a half-breed were playing against us."

"Was the stakes high?" asked Wild, acting as though he was deeply interested.

"Pretty high, though I have seen them higher. We were playing for a thousand dollars a game on this occasion."

"Whew!" exclaimed Young Wild West in an affected tone of surprise.

"Both Pete and myself were professionals at the game, but Wild Bill knew a thing about euchre, too. You see, it was all in the dealing, and not in the playing, for any one who knows anything about the game at all can play the cards if he only gets them. It is all in the getting of them, and professionals somehow always manage to get them just the time when they are most needed."

"Yes, I have heard so," and Wild nodded.

"The score stood seven to six in our favor, and it was the half-breed's deal. I cut the cards and he dealt them around, two the first time and three the last. The trump he turned up was the king of diamonds."

"Pete passed, so did Wild Bill, and I followed suit. I didn't have a trump. The half-breed picked it up. He had the king, queen, ten and nine of diamonds in his hand and the ace of spades for a side card."

"A pretty good hand, I should say."

"Yes. Well, the half-breed played it alone, and Pete sat there, with both bows and the ace in his hand. It was a dead euchre, of course, and that left the game nine to six in our favor."

"An extra thousand that we win the game!" says Wild Bill as Pete took up the cards to shuffle and deal them.

"I'll go you," says Pete, and up went the money.

"Pete felt that he must not give Wild Bill another deal. All we needed was a point, and he meant to make it. But he dared not monkey with the cards, because he was being watched too close."



"Before Wild Bill picked up his cards, he pulled out his six-shooter and laid it on the table.

"What's trumps?" he asked.

"Hearts," answers Pete, and I saw his hand slip down to his belt.

"Look out it ain't bullets!" says Bill.

"I am playing a square game," answers Pete.

"Wild Bill laughed that peculiar laugh of his, and the half-breed joined him.

"Well, to make a long story short, Pete picked up the trump. I had the queen and nine of hearts in my hand and the ace, jack and ten of clubs. I thought I would be able to help him out a little, and was confident of making the point that we needed to go out.

"It was Bill's lead, but before he put out the card he out with a bag of gold dust.

"I'll bet you another thousand that you are euchred!" he said.

"I'll take the bet," Pete replied, quietly as you please, and the money was put up.

"I saw there was trouble brewing, and I made up my mind that I had better get ready for it.

"Bill led out the ace of diamonds and I trumped it with my nine of hearts and the half-breed went over me with the left bower. Then Pete slapped on the right and took in the trick.

"It was pretty sharp playing, but no one showed any signs of excitement. Pete led back with the king of spades and Bill put on the ace. I had no spades, so I trumped it with my queen of hearts. The half-breed had the ten of spades, so he put it on, and I raked in the trick.

"I led the ace of clubs in an attempt for the third trick, but Wild Bill trumped it with the ten-spot, and that made one for them. Bill fired out the ace of trumps next, and of course, took in that trick.

"There were no more trumps out now, and when he came back with the queen of clubs, I slapped on my ten and made up my mind that it rested with my partner to do the business.

"The half-breed could not beat the lead, and just as Pete was going to slap the king of clubs on it, Wild Bill grabbed for the money and raised his revolver at the same time.

"This is the last trump out!" he said, waving his shooter in a circle around his head.

"Here's one that will beat it, though!" cried Pete, and before I knew it, he had Bill covered. 'Let go that gun!'

"Down drops the gun, and Wild Bill says: 'You've got me beat, I guess. I'll cave.' Pete rakes in the money, and we divided it a few minutes later. What do you think of that for a game of euchre?"

"Pretty good," said Wild.

Just then some lively shooting started outside the door, and the crowd made a rush. Young Wild West started to follow them.

How it was he hardly knew, but somebody tripped him, and then a heavy blow landed on his head, rendering him unconscious.

His three friends had been among the first to rush out of the place to learn what all the shooting meant.

They very quickly found that it did not amount to anything, as two of the strangers were simply throwing up their hats and shooting at them.

Missing Young Wild West, they followed the proprietor in to see what had become of him, knowing that he was seldom left behind when there was any shooting going on.

But Young Wild West was not in the place!

## CHAPTER V.

### THE GAMBLERS OPEN FOR BUSINESS.

Though the blow Young Wild West had received did not cut his scalp, it landed in the right spot to render him unconscious.

The plotters against him had laid their plans well.

They had intended to meet him on the street, and while he euchre story was being related to him, start a row and then render him unconscious, or kill him on the spot and carry him off.

They did not intend that his body should ever be found, so it would always remain a mystery as to what had become of him.

The foul trick had been performed so suddenly that no one had seen it done, save the villains themselves.

Wild was dragged out of the side door in the twinkling of an eye and thrown over the back of a waiting pony.

Pete Sterling led the animal off in the darkness, and the rest got into the barroom again before the crowd came in.

When Wild opened his eyes, a few minutes later, he found that he was bound and gagged and lying on a rocky floor.

It was as dark as a pocket where he was, and a deathly silence prevailed.

"I was caught napping that time," he thought. "I must confess that I had no idea that the gamblers were up to anything of that sort."

Strange as it may seem, the boy was not in the least bit alarmed at the predicament he was in. He never thought that he was liable to be killed. He began to study a way to get out without delay.

But how could he expect to get out without the assistance of some one?

He argued that it could hardly be possible that the men had carried him out of the saloon without at least one of his friends seeing him, and that being the case, help was bound to come, sooner or later.

After he had regained his strength somewhat, he began trying to work his hands free.

They had been tied with rather thin cords and cut his wrists pretty badly.

The more he tugged at them, the more they cut in, and it became so painful that he was forced to desist.

What little air there was in the place was damp and foul.

"I wonder where I am, anyway," he thought. "I couldn't have been carried very far from the saloon, for I don't think I was unconscious long."

For the space of ten minutes he remained perfectly quiet, gradually coming to the conclusion that his position was, indeed, a serious one.

He was just about to make another effort to free his hands when he heard the sound of footsteps outside.

The next minute there was a sudden jar, and a faint light came in.

"We have got to hurry," he heard a voice say. "They may take it into their heads to look for him here."

"Well, get hold of him, then, and we'll get him in the box!"

This was said by another, and Wild failed to recognize either of the voices.

The next moment he was lifted bodily from the ground and carried about ten feet.

Then he was doubled up and placed in a box; the lid was shut and fastened, and he felt that he was moving.

Where he was being taken to he had no idea.

There were wheels under him; he could tell that.

He was on a wagon, but where was it going? That was the question.

It could not be possible that they would drive him through the town.

But as the wagon proceeded Wild soon came to the conclusion that they were not going over the roads of the town; it was too rough for that.

Ten minutes passed.

The horse was going at a jog now, and the box was being bumped about regardless of its contents.

On, on it kept, and finally half an hour slipped by.

Then the rig came to a halt.

Two men jumped out and then the horse was backed a few feet.

The box, which was a strong one, was then rolled out, striking the ground with a thud that gave Wild a pretty good shaking up.

It was righted sufficiently to allow the lid to open, and when this was done, the brave boy saw that he had been brought to the mountain side.

The moon was shining brightly, and by its light he could see that he was near the edge of a precipice.

It was the brink of a narrow chasm that the wagon had been backed to.

This was a part of the mountain Wild had never visited, and he had no idea of how far he was from Weston.

The men both had on white masks, so he could not tell if he had ever seen them before.

Just why they wore masks cannot be conjectured, as they were out for murder, and nothing else, and there was no one to see them but their intended victim himself.

"I don't think any one will ever think of looking for him down there," said one of the villains.

"No," was the reply. "They couldn't get down there, anyhow, unless they were lowered down with a rope."



"If he don't get killed from the fall, then he will stay there and starve to death."

"Oh, I guess the fall will fix him all right. It must be three or four hundred feet to the bottom."

Young Wild West now realized that nothing short of a miracle would save him.

He gave himself up for lost.

It was hard to die so young, especially when the world seemed so bright to him just then.

The many thrilling incidents of his life flashed through the mind of Wild as if by magic.

But worst of all, were the thoughts of the girl he loved.

"Poor Arietta!"

He would have said this aloud if he could have done so.

But he could not cry out, and something like a groan came from his muffled lips as the two men picked him up.

He struggled to keep them from throwing him over the precipice. It was useless.

One of them had him by the shoulders and the other held fast to his ankles.

They began swinging his body back and forth.

"One!" exclaimed the man at his head.

"Two!"

A muffled groan again came from Wild.

"Three!"

Then it seemed to him that his body shot high into the air, and then—

Down, down he went with the force of a descending cannon ball!

As hard-hearted as the villains were, they quickly turned from the brink and hurried to the wagon.

"Jump in!" exclaimed one of them, hoarsely. "It makes my flesh creep to think of that fellow's fate."

The other said nothing, but lost no time in getting in the wagon.

The horse was started, and notwithstanding that the way was exceedingly rough, the horse was urged along at a swift speed.

The villains never thought of stopping to cover their tracks.

In about five minutes they reached the road that went from Weston to Spondulicks.

The horse was headed for the latter place.

Once on this road, the men removed their masks and allowed the horse to come down to a jog trot.

"We'll get into Spondulicks and put up. In the morning, about nine o'clock, we'll come back with the stuff," said the man driving.

"That's it. The game ought to be a great success, now that Young Wild West is out of the way. Pete and Lev are the greatest schemers I ever met. After being made fools of by that boy over in Spondulicks, they make friends with him and rig a plan to put him away for keeps."

The villains, who were confederates of the gamblers, reached Spondulicks in due time.

They put up for the night, and the next morning filled the box with gambling appurtenances and a few cases of imported wines and started on their way back.

They drove into Weston shortly after the noon hour and found the miners talking together in groups.

The construction of the new gambling resort was being pushed rapidly ahead. It was now enclosed and the finishing touches were being put to the roof.

The three owners of the concern were there superintending the work, and as the wagon drove up they came out to it.

"What's the excitement about?" asked the driver in a voice loud enough for everybody standing about to hear.

"Young Wild West has not been seen since last night," replied Sterling. "His friends seem to think that something has happened to him."

"He is the young fellow who is responsible for the remarkable growth of the town, ain't he?"

"Yes, that's him. He come out of the Gazoo when that shooting was going on last night, and that is the last he was seen by any one, it seems."

Cheyenne Charlie was in one of the groups of men near by, and he took in this conversation with interest.

The gamblers talked a little further on the subject, and then proceeded to unload the box from the wagon.

They took it inside the new building and opened it so the men who wanted to peep in could see what it contained.

"We will open up for business to-morrow night," said Lev Sharp to the crowd.

"Good enough!" cried a miner, who was a great lover of faro.

"That's ther cheese!" added another, and then about a dozen gave a combined cry of approval.

The rest of the gamblers' stuff was already in the building, but none of it was set up yet.

It would not take long to do that.

After the crowd had gone away, Banks and Sterling went down the cellar by a narrow flight of steps.

The cellar had the appearance of being completed. The floor was of sand and quite level.

After the men had fastened the trap-door, they walked over to the rear end and lifting some planks aside, disclosed a hole about eight feet deep.

The planks had been covered with sand, so that a person looking in there would never have known that the hole existed.

"This has got to be four feet deeper," said Banks. "We must finish it to-night. I'll guarantee that there will be some more people disappearing around here before many days."

"Yes," laughed Sterling. "They will be those who have too much money and get boozy."

Banks got down into the pit and began digging, while Sterling hauled the dirt up in a pail and dumped it in a heap.

They worked like beavers for a couple of hours, and then they decided that it was deep enough.

"Now to get the chute in place and the dirt out, and then all we will have to do is to cut the trap-door through and put on the hinges," remarked Banks.

"And put up the partition," added Sterling.

"Well, that is all ready to put up, ain't it?"

"Yes, Jones has it about done, I guess. I'll see when I go up."

The villains did see to it. By twelve that night they had all arrangements made for the trap part of the establishment they were about to open.

A chute that was almost perpendicular led down from a small room in the rear of the building right into the pit.

In the bottom of the pit were half a dozen sharpened spikes, embedded in solid oak.

These were about eight inches long, and they meant almost certain death to any one who chanced to fall heavily upon them.

The finishing touches were put on the building by the large force of men the next day and by four o'clock that afternoon the gambling den was ready to open.

There was no bar in the place at all, but a sort of sideboard was well stocked with wines and liquors.

The faro outfit was nearly new and was a beauty, speaking from the standpoint of a professional gambler.

It consisted of a table, oval in shape and covered with green cloth.

A wooden rim, one inch high and about eight inches from the edge, ran around it.

When a game is in progress the dealer sits on one side, and opposite to him are one or two assistants, whose business it is to watch the game.

The dealer is also generally the banker, or *tailleur*, as they call them in France.

Any number can play the game, and each player is furnished with a suit of thirteen cards from a deck of playing cards and four other cards with blue, yellow, black and red marks on them.

These cards are strictly plain except the colored marks on them.

The players, having chosen a card or cards, place the same on the table just within the line and put their stakes on them, or on other cards, if they wish, face downward at the head of those betted on.

The money placed on the cards by the player is answered by the banker, who limits the sums to be played for, according to the magnitude of his bank.

The banker then takes an entire pack of cards, which he invariably counts, for if there should be one more or less than fifty-two the bank must then pay every stake depending on the cards of the different players.

The cards being counted, he must shuffle and mix them, well, as no one but the dealer or one of the bankers is allowed to touch the cards, except to cut them, which is generally done by one of the players.

After the cards are cut, the dealer shows the bottom card to the company and leaves one of the same sort, with the corners cut off, turned up on the table, that every one may know what card is at the bottom, without asking the dealer.

The players having put up their stakes, the dealer announces that he is about to begin his deal by saying: "Play!"

He then proceeds deliberately to turn up the cards from



the top of the pack—one by one—laying the first card on his right, the second on his left, and so on till he has turned up every card in the pack, laying twenty-six on one side and twenty-six on the other.

He calls out the name of each card as he turns it up.

The cards on the right are for the bank, and those on the left are for the players, and the dealer stops to pay the player each time a winning card is turned up.

Sometimes a player gets reckless and bets that the next card will be an ace, or whatever he chooses to call it.

Players, when in luck, have often been known to break the bank, but it seldom happens.

In cases where this has been done, it has been through sticking to one card right along till all the cards have been dealt.

Faro is a game that will ruin any one who follows it up, and it has only been explained here in order to make the subsequent happenings more plain to the reader.

In addition to the faro table, there was a roulette table and a shuffle board.

Roulette is a favorite game among gamblers. This game is played by setting a ball spinning around the table.

It falls into one of thirty-eight holes that are numbered, and the bets are won and lost that way.

It is a game of chance, with the chances invariably in favor of the man who is backing the game.

Shortly before dark Joel Banks went outside and announced in a loud tone that the place was open to do business, and instantly a crowd filed into the building.

Among the men who came in was a handsome young stranger, with a bull blond beard, who was attired in the costume of an English tourist.

He appeared to be alone, and evidently went in out of mere curiosity.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE SEARCH FOR YOUNG WILD WEST.

Young Wild West's friends were very much worried over his strange disappearance.

Pretty Arietta Murdock heard of it less than half an hour after.

"You last saw him at the Gazoo, you say?" she said to Cheyenne Charlie.

"Yes," was the reply, as the scout shook his head in a puzzled way.

"What was taking place when you last saw him?"

"Them gambler fellers was tellin' him a story of what they done once. Then all of a sudden a couple of fellers got to shootin' outside, an' we run out to see what was up. Ther shootin' was only done for fun, we found out, an' then we looked around for Wild an' found that he wasn't there. We went inside, an' was told that he run out with ther rest of us when ther shootin' started. We've hunted all over town an' he can't be found."

"Well, he must be found!" exclaimed the girl. "You can depend upon it that the gamblers have played some sort of a trick on him. They are anxious to take his life, you know."

"Yes, I know that. Et, it strikes me that what you think is right. Wild has got to be found, as you say, an' I'm goin' to be ther one to find him. I'll git Jim an' Jack, an' we'll hunt all over ag'in, an' if he ain't nowhere in town we'll look for him on ther mountain. I won't give up ther hunt till I find him or get tidin's of him."

"I know you will, Charlie," and there were tears in the eyes of the girl as she thought of the peril her handsome young lover might be in.

At this juncture they were joined by Jim Dart and Jack Robedee.

The faces of the two showed signs of deep anxiety.

"I can't understand it," said Jim. "Wild is nowhere to be found; neither is there a trace of him. I never was so muzzled over anything in my whole life."

"It seems that he must have been swallowed up or carried off by a witch or somethin'," added Jack.

"He has met with foul play," exclaimed Arietta. "Those gamblers are at the bottom of it, I feel sure. But perhaps they have not killed him, and you may be able to find him before it is too late."

"We'll hunt till we do find him!" cried Robedee.

"That's what I say," chimed in Charlie. "I jest told Arietta that we would hunt all over ag'in in town, an' then if we don't have any luck, we'll try on ther mountainside."

"That's it!" said Jim, and a hopeful look crossed his face. "Come on! We must not let the grass grow under our feet."

The three went out and again instituted a search through the town.

It took them some time to do it, and when they had gone over every inch of ground the situation was just as it had been before.

Not the least trace had been found of Young Wild West.

The last he had been seen he was listening to the story one of the gamblers was telling.

"I s'pose ther'd be no use of askin' them three fellers who are buildin' ther gamblin' house," observed Cheyenne Charlie.

"No," retorted Jim. "They have already given it out that they saw him run out of the Gazoo when the shooting took place outside. Sharp and Sterling both declare that he came out with them."

"They'd talk that way, of course, if they did have anything to do with it," said Robedee.

"Well, we'll saddle our horses an' ride up ther mountain," Charlie observed after a pause. "If such a thing kin be that he was caught an' taken up there we might find some signs of it. We might strike ther ones as took him there, on their way back to town."

Without another word, the scout hastened to the stable where his horse was kept, and Jim and Jack started on a run to get their steeds.

In less than ten minutes later they were mounted and riding up the hill on the road that led along the mountain ridge.

"See here!" exclaimed Jim, suddenly: "Brown told me that two of the men who followed the gambling outfit over here are missing also!"

"He did!" cried Charlie and Jack in a breath.

"Yes."

"Why didn't you speak of that before?" asked the scout.

"I have been so worked up over Wild's disappearance that I forgot about it. The thing just came into my mind now. Brown told me that when I was questioning him the first time. But just as he was telling me some one came in and interrupted our talk, and then you two fellers came along, and it dropped from my mind."

"Well, if that is the case, I reckon we are on ther right trail," and Cheyenne Charlie nodded as though he really thought a clew had been found. "We will hunt around in all ther places we know of, such as caves an' other hidin'-places, an' then if we don't find out anything we'll go on to Spondulicks an' hunt up ther two fellers what left town."

This appeared the proper thing to do, so Jim and Jack agreed with him.

Then they searched as only three anxious mortals could.

But it was a vain one, for all that.

When it was getting well on toward morning they came to a halt on the trail about three miles from Weston.

They were very dejected, as might be supposed.

"It is too bad," said the scout, as he dismounted and sat down on a rock.

"We have hunted through every nook and cranny that it is possible to without the aid of daylight," retorted Jim.

"An' that makes only one thing to do now," remarked Jack.

"What is that?" Charlie questioned.

"We must go to Spondulicks."

"I am of that opinion, too," and Jim Dart spoke hopefully again.

"Well, I'll tell you what we will do, then," said Charlie, rising to his feet. "You two kin ride over to Spondulicks, an' I'll hang around here till daylight an' take another scout around."

"Good!"

"If you find them two fellers what's missing over there, see to it that they are taken care of."

"You bet we will! We will make them own up to what happened to Young Wild West, at the point of our revolvers," Jim assured him.

"An' if they have killed him, they'll die on ther spot," added Robedee, speaking with great emphasis.

"That's right!"

"Well, we will be off at once, then," said Jim, as he lighted a match and looked at his watch. "It is two o'clock."

"All right! You two fellers go on. I'd go with you, but somethin' tells me that I had better stay around here."

"Got a presentiment?"

"No, hardly that. Go on, if you're goin'. You know jest what to do. I'm so worried over Wild bein' gone that I'm



getting nervous. I'm goin' to sit right here a while till I kin think of something to do."

The scout acted rather pettish, so Jim and Jack started off without another word.

The truth of it was that they did not expect to have much luck, but they had decided to ride over to Spondulicks, and they were going to do so.

As the most of the search had been made on foot, their steeds were fresh, and they let them go at the top of their speed.

They meant to reach Spondulicks as soon as possible.

There was only a trifle over twelve miles ahead of them, and in an hour's time they meant to be there.

But few words passed between Jim and Jack as they rode along.

They were in too low spirits to carry on a conversation.

Their best friend in the world was among the missing, and that was quite enough to make them despondent.

If they had only started for Spondulicks right away after they had been unable to find Wild in Weston they would have overtaken the wagon with the two villains.

But as it was, the rig had had ample time to get to its destination and the gamblers to find a safe hiding-place.

Jim and Jack reached Spondulicks and found the streets deserted.

Usually the place was a lively one, even all night long.

After riding through the town from one end to the other, our two friends came to a halt.

They now realized how useless it was for them to come there.

It would be like hunting for a needle in a haystack to find the two gamblers, even if they had come over from Weston and were in the town.

But they stopped in two or three places that were wide open, with gambling games in progress.

They thought they might find the two men there, but they did not.

Reluctantly they started to go back to Weston.

Their only hope now was that Young Wild West had turned up of his own accord, or that Cheyenne Charlie had found him.

When they came to the spot where they had left the scout they halted and looked around for him.

But there was no sign of him.

They rode on, and day was breaking when they reached the office of the Wild West Mining and Improvement Company.

With heavy hearts they unsaddled their horses and put them in the stable.

Then they sat down on the office steps to wait—for just what they did not know.

But let us turn to Cheyenne Charlie.

For the space of an hour he sat on the rock where Jim and Jack left him when they rode off to Spondulicks.

The scout did not fall asleep; never did he once think of doing so.

He was thoroughly awake, but he sat there like one who had suddenly been stricken helpless.

Finally he got up.

"I'll take another look around before daylight," he muttered. "Then, if I don't have any luck, I'll wait till I kin see. Then I will strike somethin'; I feel it in my bones."

The scout got up, and taking his horse by the bridle, led him into a convenient niche.

Then he started on foot to resume the search for Young Wild West.

"He is around here somewhere. Ther more I think about it, ther more I feel sure of it," he said, half aloud.

Charlie had not gone over a hundred yards into the tangled mazes of the mountain undergrowth when he detected the sound of a footfall not far distant.

Instantly he came to a halt.

His revolver in his hand, ready for instant use, he crouched and listened.

His sharp ears caught the sounds made by receding footsteps, just as sure as he was alive!

Thinking that he had at last struck a clew that would lead to the finding of Wild, alive or dead, he started cautiously in the direction the sounds came from.

Whoever it was who was moving along in front of him, he was not very particular about the noise his footsteps made.

For five minutes the scout crept along and then he was so close that all of a sudden he saw a dark object cross in a faint patch of light that came from the stars.

As quick as a flash, he leaped to his feet and darted after the form.

"Up with your hands, or you are a dead man!" he cried, leveling his revolver.

For an answer a growl came to his ears.

"Gee whiz!" he exclaimed under his breath; "it ain't a man, it's a bear!"

He was right on this, for it was a grizzly he had been following.

And that was not the worst of it! The animal was going to show fight!

Cheyenne Charlie was not afraid of any grizzly that ever lived.

He had tackled such fellows as this before, and he had come out victorious, too.

Still, he did not wish to get into a hand-to-hand conflict with the big beast.

So he stepped behind a neighboring tree and unslung his rifle.

The beast was lumbering toward him now, and the muzzle of his rifle was within a foot of its snout when he pulled the trigger.

As the report rang out on the still night air the grizzly staggered back and fell to the ground in the throes of death. The bullet had reached a vital spot.

"I like bear steaks," thought the scout, "but I ain't got time now to think about eatin'. You'll have to lay there, Mister Grizzly. I'm lookin' for Young Wild West."

Leaving the bear where it had fallen, he continued his search.

Pretty soon it began to grow light in the east.

Cheyenne Charlie brightened up.

He would soon be able to see now.

Then he could take more risks in going about among the treacherous places that were in that wild part of the mountain region.

When nearly an hour had passed he found himself back to his horse, pretty well tired out and very much discouraged.

"I'll never dare to go back an' face Arietta without tidin's of some sort," he muttered. "If Wild ain't found ther little gal's heart will break, jest as sure as anything!"

He untied his horse and mounted in a mechanical fashion.

Strange as it may seem, the steed turned away from Weston, instead of heading for home, as a horse is apt to do after being away from it for some time.

The scout let him have his own way, and as the sun was now coming up, he could see things plainly.

The scout had not ridden over a mile when he suddenly noticed the fresh tracks of a wagon that left the road and proceeded through a thicket.

He dismounted quickly and made an examination and soon nodded his head in a satisfied way.

"A wagon went in here, an' then come out ag'in not many hours ago," he muttered. "Now, I'll follow ther trail an' see where it went."

A few minutes later he heard the call of a quail.

Cheyenne Charlie gave a violent start when he heard this. Then he answered the call.

## CHAPTER VII.

### WILD IN DISGUISE.

As Young Wild West felt himself going downward, he uttered a quick, silent prayer to the Great Ruler of the Universe and shut his eyes.

He felt that he had never been so near his end before.

Though his fall did not last half a second, it seemed to be an hour when he struck—not upon the jagged rocks at the bottom of the chasm—but into the top of an evergreen tree, which grew out from the face of the precipice.

"Thank heaven!" thought the boy fervently as the tree bent downward beneath his weight and allowed him to slide upon a narrow ledge.

As his body struck the ledge, he felt a sharp pain in one of his wrists and involuntarily he made a move to pull it from beneath him.

Much to his joy, he found that it was free.

In striking, the bonds that held his wrists together came in contact with a sharp piece of projecting stone and severed them, at the same time cutting a gash in his wrist.



But the wound was nothing just then; he had gained his liberty!

The first thing he did was to remove the gag from his mouth, after which he arose to a sitting posture.

"That was the closest call I ever had," he exclaimed. "That beats being lowered down a deep hole and left to starve to death with a corpse, as I was once. My! but I certainly thought my last moment had come!"

Young Wild West was now himself again. It did not take him long to recover from the shock, and he promptly began to untie the rope about his ankles.

This accomplished, he felt about him and found that he was sitting right on the edge of the ledge of rock that Providence had been kind enough to throw him on.

"I couldn't have fallen over twenty feet," he mused. "And yet it seemed to be a mile. I am not safe yet, by any means, and I have got to be careful, or I will slip off and go on down."

He slid back against the uneven wall as close as he could get to it and remained in deep thought for a while.

He was not long in coming to the conclusion that the gamblers were the hardest lot he had come in contact with yet.

They had knocked him senseless and taken him out of a public place right under the very noses of his friends.

It did not seem possible that such a thing could be done, but Wild understood it all now, though he had been unable to recognize the two men who had brought him to the precipice and thrown him over.

He thought of the wonderful story of Wild Bill that had been told him and realized that it was a very neat dodge that had been played upon him.

"I can't see how to get off this ledge in the dark," he muttered, "so I suppose I'll have to wait here till daylight."

This was not a very pleasant prospect ahead, but it was much better than death.

Wild knew it would be inadvisable for him to cry for help, as it might bring his enemies to the spot.

It was not likely that his friends were in that vicinity, unless they had followed the wagon.

"Followed the wagon! Perhaps they did!" thought the boy.

Wild began to whistle in imitation of a quail calling to its mate.

He knew if either Jim Dart or Cheyenne Charlie was within hearing they would recognize the signal.

And if his enemies were still in the vicinity they might wonder at the strangeness of a quail whistling after dark.

Wild repeated this signal several times, but there came no answer.

"The wagon was not followed," he muttered. "But I might know that, anyway, for if my pards had seen it and had the least idea I was in the box they would have found out right then and there, and there would have been some lead flying."

He now began to crawl slowly along the ledge in search of a wider place to lie down on.

He had come to the conclusion that he must stay there all night, at least, and he did not intend to lose any sleep over it.

Used to the rough ways of the West as he was, any place was good enough to sleep on.

The ledge was not over a dozen feet in length, and selecting the widest part, Wild threw himself out at full length and courted sleep.

It came to him much sooner than might be expected.

When Young Wild West awoke he was lying on his bed in the cottage at Weston.

When Young Wild West awoke the sun was just coming up.

He could not see the glorious orb of day, but he could see the reddening sky above it in the east.

He remained perfectly still for a second, and then he realized just what had happened.

Beyond a bump on his head, which ached him a little, he felt as good as ever.

The bump had not been caused by the fall, either; it was from the blow he had received in the Gazoo.

Wild slowly got upon his feet.

One glance about him told him that there was no way to get off the ledge without the assistance of some one above.

He concluded to give the old signal again, so he whistled "Bob White!" the call of the quail.

Almost instantly it was answered by a bird itself.

Wild smiled.

"It must be a pretty good imitation," he thought.

He whistled once more.

The answer came again, but before the echoes of it had died away there came another from somewhere above him.

Young Wild West gave a start.

If he was not very much mistaken the last whistle was made by Cheyenne Charlie.

"Hello!" he called out.

"Hello!" came the answer from above.

"Is that you, Charlie?"

"Yes. Where are you? I can't see you."

"Down here on a ledge."

"How in blazes did you git there?"

"Oh, a couple of our friends, the gamblers, threw me over the precipice."

"The deuce you say! Are you hurt?"

"Not a bit. Just send the end of a rope down here, and I'll soon tell you all about it."

In a very few seconds a rope was dangling within reach of Wild.

"Make it fast to you, an' I'll haul you up," came from above.

In an exceedingly short space of time Wild did this.

"All ready!" he said.

Then he began to slowly ascend.

It was no easy matter for one man to haul him up, but it was at length accomplished, and Young Wild West stood on the brink of the chasm as free as the fresh morning air he was breathing.

"How did you come to locate me?" was the first thing he said after shaking his pard by the hand.

"Jim, Jack an' I started out to find you about an hour after you disappeared in the hotel. We thought maybe you had gone home when we wasn't lookin', an' when we found you wasn't there, we went over to Murdock's. You wasn't there, either, so we went into every public place in town to look for you."

"And you couldn't find me, so you took a trip out this way?"

"Yes. I told the boys that if you wasn't in town, somethin' had happened to you, an' that it struck me that you might be on ther mountain somewhere."

"I am mighty glad it struck you that way."

"So am I. Well, we hunted around ther best part of ther night, and then Jim and Robedee started for Spondulicks, thinkin' you might have been kidnaped an' taken over there. You see, we found out that two of ther strangers who had arrived by ther evening stage could not be found, an' that made Jim an' Jack think that you had been kidnaped by them, for sure."

"I said I'd stay on ther mountain till daylight, an' see what I could do then, an' when daylight come I found that I done ther right thing exactly."

"How did you find out?" queried Wild.

"Why, I struck a place on ther road where ther track of wagon wheels ran through a thicket. There was double tracks an' double hoof prints, which showed that ther rig had gone that way, an' then come back ag'in."

"I says to myself that I guessed I had struck a clew, an' tyin' my horse in ther bushes, I started to follow ther tracks. I heard you whistle Bob White, an'— Well, you know the rest."

"Yes, I know the rest. I think it remarkable that you should find me this way. Charlie, I have had many narrow escapes in my life, but the gamblers gave me about the tightest rub of all last night."

"Tell me about it."

Wild did so, not omitting a single detail.

Cheyenne Charlie was dumfounded.

"We'll go back to Weston an' put ther scoundrels out of business right away," he said.

"No, that won't do. I can't swear who did it. We must learn who it was who put up the job to a certainty. Of course, I know in my own mind, but I can't prove it. We must let the gamblers believe that I am dead."

"How are we goin' to do that, unless you keep yourself indoors all ther time?"

"Easy enough. I will disguise myself."

"That's so; you kin do that."

"I've got the wigs and false beards that Rob Runner, the road agent I once captured, had, and an English tourist suit of mine, which I have never worn, will be just the things."

"I guess they will."

"Very well. You ride back to Weston and get them for me. Bring the blond beard and wig and a horse. Any horse



but my own, you know, because it would not do for me to be seen riding him, as it would excite suspicion."

"I understand."

"All right, then. I'll walk slowly toward Weston and meet you on your way back. If I hear any one coming I'll hide from view at the roadside."

"That's ther cheese! You've struck it just right. My! what a head you have got on you!"

"It aches a little this morning."

"Well, ther feller that put that bump on you will suffer for it before we git through with him."

"I feel pretty sure that he will."

After a little more instruction from Wild, Cheyenne Charlie walked back to his steed, and mounting, rode for Weston.

Wild sat down for a while to study out a plan of action, and when he had done so he arose and went out upon the road.

He took it easy and when about two-thirds of the way to Weston he met Cheyenne Charlie returning.

He carried a bundle attached to his saddle-bags and was leading a bay horse.

"Good enough!" exclaimed Wild when his pard came to a halt.

"I guess I've brought jest what you wanted," Charlie answered. "I fetched along a couple of sandwiches an' a bottle of coffee, too."

"Thoughtful of you, I must say. I am as hungry as a bear."

Charlie dismounted, and the horses were led into the bushes at the roadside.

Young Wild West had taken a good wash at a little mountain stream on the way, and he at once started in on the sandwiches.

When he had finished his breakfast he opened the bundle Charlie had brought and found it to contain just what he wanted.

There was the tourist suit, which he had bought just for the fun of it one day when he visited Spondulicks.

Wild laughed as he held it up.

"Won't I look becoming in that?" he asked.

"I reckon you will," was the reply.

"And here are the wig and false whiskers. I'll have to tie up my hair like a woman before I put them on."

"I'll help you do that."

The two went right at it, and in ten minutes' time the transformation had taken place.

The blond wig covered the boy's hair nicely, and when the beard was adjusted his disguise was complete.

"I wish I had a glass to look in," said he. "I imagine I am worth seeing."

Cheyenne Charlie nodded.

"I'll bet you a fifty-cent cigar that even Arietta won't know you."

"Well, I'll take that bet, just for the sport there is in it."

"You are not to speak, so you will give yourself away."

"No; I'll carry out the deception as far as I am able."

"All right, then, if you don't lose the bet I'm a Pawnee Injun, that's all!"

Wild wrapped his regular wearing apparel in a bundle, and then the two pards mounted.

Charlie was taken with fits of laughter every once in a while on the way home, as Young Wild West gave an occasional exhibit of how a tourist not used to the saddle rides.

"You didn't tell me whether Jim and Robedee had got back when you went over," said Wild, as he thought of his other pards.

"That's so. I forgot to tell you. They are in Weston, or they was when I left. They didn't see me, an' I left orders to tell them that I would be back presently with some good news."

"Well, we will see if they will recognize me."

The horse Wild was riding was one that was owned by old man Murdock. It was not a fast runner, but was good enough for the disguised boy's purpose.

When they entered the outskirts of the town almost the first persons they saw were Jim Dart and Jack Robedee.

Wild sat in the saddle as awkward as he could, and when Charlie brought his horse to a halt he followed suit.

Jim and Jack stared hard at him, and then turned to the scout.

Their first question was if there was any news of Wild, of course.

"I seen him, an' he is all right," Charlie replied.

"Where did you find him?" asked Jim, excitedly.

"Up on the mountain."

"Is he all right, for sure?"

"Yes. He's only got a little lump on his head, that's all."

"Where is he now, then?"

"He's on business. Tryin' to find out all about who fixed him last night."

The two were greatly pleased to hear that Wild was alive, and they appeared to be disappointed at not seeing him.

"Tell us all about what happened to him," said Robedee.

"Wait till we get inside. I don't want any one to hear a word of what I am going to say but you two an' my friend here."

The two were on foot, and without another word they started for the house where they resided with Young Wild West.

Wild and Cheyenne Charlie allowed their horses to walk along after them, and when they got to the door they dismounted.

"My friend will go in with us," observed Charlie as they started to enter the door.

Jim and Jack looked at what they supposed to be an English dandy distrustfully, but said nothing.

"Aw, by jove! mebbe you don't want me to come in," spoke up our hero in a disguised voice.

"Come on!" exclaimed Charlie. "I told you when we met this morning that you should go where I went. You kin make up your mind that this is your home as long as you stay in Weston, too."

The two puzzled inmates of the house looked at each other.

They could not imagine what had come over Cheyenne Charlie.

It seemed strange to them that he should pick up a total stranger and bring him there.

But the worst of it was that he appeared to be so intimate with him.

But they were just dying to hear something of Wild, so they conducted the guest to a seat in the private room of the house, and then all hands sat down.

Then Cheyenne Charlie recited the story of Wild's adventures just as the boy had told it to him.

He followed up with the rescue and proceeded to tell the rest.

When he got to the part where he started back to Weston to procure a disguise for Wild, Jim and Jack took a tumble.

They sprang to their feet and flung their arms about the neck of the supposed English tourist.

"To think that you could fool me like that!" gasped Jim.

"This beats ther deck!" exclaimed Robedee.

Wild laughed heartily.

"I guess my make-up must be a good one," he said. "I think I'll take a look in the glass and see how I do look."

When he saw his reflection he turned to Charlie and observed:

"You'll win the fifty-cent cigar, old man. I am satisfied that Et won't know me."

"I thought so," was the retort.

"I'll ride over to the post-office and see," and as he turned to leave the house he added:

"Remember, boys, this is to be kept a secret until I say differently. I suppose it will be necessary to let old man Murdock and Dove-Eye Dave and their families know, but that will be all. When we are bucking these gamblers we are up against a stiff game, and we have got to proceed with caution."

His three pards agreed with him on this point, and then stood and watched him as he rode toward the post-office, bouncing up and down in the saddle in a ridiculous fashion.

When Wild brought his horse to a halt in front of the post-office he half fell off, and then, after tying the animal, sputtering the words "beastly" and "by jove!" meanwhile, he went inside.

In a disguised voice, he called for an envelope and sheet of paper, and when Arietta handed them over to him he ogled her awfully.

She blushed, and after looking at him keenly for a moment, returned to her work.

Wild took a pencil and wrote the following on the sheet of paper:

"DEAR ET—What is the matter with you? You won't even recognize me when we meet! Have you met somebody you like better than me?"

WILD.



This he addressed to Arietta, and then handed it to her to post for him.

When she saw the address she turned pale, for she recognized the handwriting.

But even then she did not seem to recognize him, and it was not until she had torn open the envelope that she turned timidly toward him with a glad cry.

Wild laughed in his old familiar way.

"You rogue," she cried. "Why did you go away so mysteriously and give us all such a scare?"

"Wait till I tell you, little one."

She heard his story and promised to keep the deception a secret.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE GAMBLERS' FIRST NIGHT.

The gamblers looked pleased when they saw the crowd rushing in.

When their eyes lighted on the young man in the tourist suit, Sharp and Sterling exchanged glances.

They had met just such looking fellows before, and they had always proved easy victims.

Wild noticed the exchange of glances, and he made up his mind, then and there, that they were going to get fooled.

Cheyenne Charlie and his other two partners had come to the gambling house, too, but Wild had come in alone.

They were not supposed to know him just then.

Young Wild West knew considerable of the game of faro. He had never played it, but had witnessed some stirring scenes in connection with it.

He resolved to play to-night.

He always acted on impulse, and that was his impulse when he started to enter the place.

He managed to get into the first deal, and not being able to withstand the temptation, Cheyenne Charlie got in, too.

The scout meant to play the same as Wild did, for the most part.

Wild's suit of cards were clubs.

He looked them over carefully and then laid ten dollars on the jack.

The cards being shuffled and cut, the dealer started in.

The jack of clubs came up the first thing.

"By jove! I—aw—seem to be in luck!" exclaimed the supposed tourist. "I guess I will let the—aw—whole amount lay on the same card."

Charlie placed some money on the card this time, and so did a couple of the miners.

It turned up for the dealer this time, and they all lost.

Wild acted his part to perfection. He appeared to be a little disturbed, but pulled out a hundred dollars from his pocket and put it on the same card.

Charlie followed suit, but no one else did this time.

The jack of clubs turned up.

"I—aw—believe that jack of clubs is all right," drawled Wild. "I am going to lay a thousand on it this time."

The dealer and his assistants smiled at each other.

They thought this would about wind the tourist up.

The cards were shuffled and cut, and then the first one dealt out was the jack of clubs again.

Pete Sterling was doing the dealing and he looked at Lev Sharp in astonishment.

He could not understand how it was that the card turned up.

He gazed keenly at the lucky player, but there was nothing but a look of innocent exultation on the face of Wild.

"You are very lucky, young man," he observed, as another thousand dollars was left on the same card.

"I have great confidence in—aw—the jack of clubs," was the reply he received.

"Well, I guess the bank can stand for it, so keep right on, young fellow."

Young Wild West did keep right on.

He won four more times in succession, making his total winnings something like seven thousand dollars.

The next time it came to deal the banker said they would have an intermission of a few minutes.

"Come and have a bottle of wine," he said to Wild. "You are one of the luckiest players I ever saw."

"I don't drink wine, but I'll smoke a good cigar with you."

"Very well. We have cigars here that cost a dollar apiece. You can try one of those."

Young Wild West never backed down on anything.

He had his revolver ready, so he did not feel afraid of the gamblers.

He followed Pete Sterling into the rear room and sat down to a table with him.

A waiter of the place went in with a bottle of wine and a box of cigars.

"Wild hadn't oughter gone in there," whispered Jack Robedee to Jim Dart.

"I don't think he had, either."

"He is too risky altogether. Those fellows mean to rob him."

"They think he is an innocent greenhorn, but won't they get fooled!"

"We must be ready for a fight, for it is likely there will be one."

Ten minutes passed and neither Wild nor Pete Sterling came out.

Then Sharp opened up the game again.

The men went on playing and Jim and Jack got interested watching the game.

Another ten minutes passed, and then, as they looked around, they saw the door of the back room open and out came the gambler and the supposed English tourist.

A feeling of relief went up from the two who had felt so uneasy.

"He come out all right, after all," whispered Jack.

"Yes," answered Jim. "He is going to play again."

Sure enough, the two walked up to the faro table, and once more a thousand dollars was laid on the jack of clubs.

It did not win this time, and with the drawling voice he had used Young Wild West exclaimed:

"I guess I am through for to-night. I'll come in again, gents."

The boy's pards could not help notice that the gamblers seemed to be very much disturbed over something.

They seemed relieved to see the young fellow go out, but acted as though they would like to follow him.

A few minutes later Cheyenne Charlie quit the game, and then the three friends of Wild left the gambling house.

They found him in Brown's Gazoo, drinking a bottle of ale.

He invited them to drink as they entered, still keeping up the part he was playing.

"How did you make out?" he asked Cheyenne Charlie.

"I am ahead just sixty dollars," was the reply.

"Well, I am ahead nearly six thousand. I had great luck, didn't I?"

"Yes," answered all three.

"And I had quite an adventure in that back room."

This was said in a low tone.

"What was it?"

"I'll tell you when I get over to the house."

"Let's go over now," suggested Charlie.

"Wait a while. I want to let these people know that the greenhorn is not afraid of them."

They did wait about half an hour, and then Wild went over to the house alone, the others following.

Once in the house, Wild removed his disguise and let down his flowing hair.

"Now I'll tell you all about what happened to me when I went into the back room with Pete Sterling," he said.

"You were gone long enough," observed Jack.

"I came near being gone for good, too. I took a tumble just in time to save myself. Of course, I knew that the villain was after what money I had, but I had no idea that they meant to kill me to get it."

"There was one particular chair in the room that he wanted me to sit on, and as soon as I became aware of this I was determined not to."

"When the waiter came in with the wine and cigars he, too, invited me to sit on that particular chair."

"No," said I; "I'll stand up and have my smoke."

"Sterling sat on a chair opposite the one they wanted me to sit in, with his right foot under the table. I lit my cigar, and then the waiter took me by the arm and tried to force me gently into the chair."

"I whirled around quickly and sat him there instead, and the moment he landed upon the chair he sank through the floor like a shot!"

"The dickens!" exclaimed Cheyenne Charlie. "What happened then?"

"Oh, I simply covered Sterling with my revolver and asked him what he was up to. He coaxed me to say nothing of what had happened, and as he got up from the table the chair came up through the floor and stopped in its old place."

"And the waiter?" gasped Jim.



"Must be a deader."

"That beats anything I ever heard of!" cried Cheyenne Charlie. "Talking about luck at faro! Why, Wild, you have got it at everything."

"It ain't all luck; it's good judgment an' good luck together," spoke up Jack Robedee.

The other two at once agreed with him.

But none of them could help thinking about the murder trap in the gambling house.

Wild had thought of what Arietta had told him the instant he saw the chair sink with the waiter.

But if she had not told him anything at all, he would not have occupied the chair, just because they were too anxious to have him to.

In spite of all he had passed through in the past twenty-four hours, Young Wild West slept as sound as a top that night.

He did not get up as early as usual the next morning.

Jack Robedee was the first one stirring, and as he went out of doors he saw a man approaching, whom he thought he recognized.

As he got a little nearer he saw it was one of the gamblers.

It was Sterling, and when he got a little nearer he nodded pleasantly and said good-morning.

"Good-mornin'!" answered Jack, who, of course, had no love for the man.

"Have you heard anything of Young Wild West yet?" asked the villain.

"No; we think he must have gone to Denver, as he had some business over there, an' talked about goin'."

"Rather funny for him to go away without saying anything, though, wasn't it?"

"Well, yes. That is what puzzles us all. But he'll show up all right—we are certain of that."

"I hope he does," said Sterling, making a move to go on, but halting suddenly and adding:

"By the way, isn't that English-looking chap stopping with you?"

"Yes: He said he did not want to stay at a hotel, so we took him for a few days."

"He is what I call a very lucky man at faro."

"Yes. If I was as lucky as he is, I'd play ther game myself."

"We wouldn't want to see many more like him around here. If there were, our bank would soon be broke."

"I should think so," retorted Robedee, who was now about mad enough to seize the gambler by the throat and strangle him.

If anything he hated, it was a lying hypocrite.

And here was one right before him.

If it had not been for his promise to Wild, the chances are that there would have been one less gambler in Weston that morning, for Robedee would surely have picked a muss with him and shot him.

"I say!" exclaimed Sterling, suddenly. "I'd like to see the young fellow, if you have no objections. He and I got on quite friendly terms last night, and I promised to see him this morning."

"He is not up yet."

"Couldn't you wake him? I must see him before I go back to the store. It is necessary that I should."

Jack went into the house.

Jim was up and had overheard the conversation outside.

"Don't wake Wild," he said. "I'll put on that rig and come out."

"All right," and Jack grinned.

"He'll be out in a minute," he said as he went outside and proceeded with his work of splitting some kindling wood.

In about ten minutes Jim came out, wearing the disguise.

"Good-morning, Mr. Sterling," he said, pleasantly.

"Good-morning, sir, Mr.——"

"Davis, please. I forgot to introduce myself to you last night."

"Ah! Mr. Davis! I am glad to know you."

"The feeling is mutual, I assure you."

"Would you mind taking a walk a little ways over there? I want to speak to you on important business."

"Certainly I won't mind. What is it you wish?"

"Come on and I'll tell you."

The two walked away, leaving Jack Robedee staring hard at their receding forms.

They had just got lost to view in a clump of trees when two pistol shots rang out in quick succession, and the next instant Jim showed up.

"What is the matter?" called out Jack.

"Nothing much," retorted Jim, coolly. "He tried to drop me, but I shot about as quick as he did. His bullet went through the collar of my coat, and mine went through his heart!"

"That's putty good!" muttered Jack. "I'd like to have done ther job myself."

Just then they saw Sterling come out of the grove and start on a run in the direction of the center of the town. He was very much alive, in spite of what Jim said!

## CHAPTER IX.

### WING WAH.

"That beats anything I ever saw or heard of!" exclaimed Jim Dart, as he gazed at the receding form of the gambler. "I could swear that I shot him right through the heart. It was his life or mine, and I had to do it."

"But you didn't hurt him a particle," said Jack Robedee.

"A man who kin run like that ain't shot through ther heart or lung, either. You must have missed him, an' he fell an' played 'possum on yer."

"No, I didn't miss him, either. I was not three feet from him when we both fired. My bullet went through his clothes if it didn't go through his heart. I know that."

"Well, if that is ther case, he must have a breast-plate on."

"That's it!" cried Jim. "That is the only way to account for it. My! but I can consider myself a very lucky fellow. He certainly meant to kill me!"

When Wild got up they told him of what had happened. He seemed much surprised.

"So that is the sort of men we are bucking against?" he observed. "Well, that warns me that if I ever do have to open fire on any of them, to take an eye instead of a heart for target."

"That's it," said Jack.

Jim exhibited the hole through the collar of his coat.

"If I hadn't ducked to one side as he drew on me, I would certainly have been a goner," he said. "He turned and fired without a moment's warning, but I was on the watch and ready for him."

"You make a pretty good-looking tourist, I must say," said Wild as he stood back and surveyed Jim in the suit of clothes and beard.

"Looks jest ther same as you exactly," spoke up Jack. "I hadn't known it was him. I would have thought it was you."

"Breast-plates, eh?" mused Young Wild West, half to himself. "Well, that is what I call pretty good."

After thinking the matter over, he came to the conclusion that it would be best for the "English tourist" to disappear for a while, anyway.

He told Jim and Robedee what he thought, and they agreed with him.

"But you have got to wear another disguise, haven't you?" asked Jim.

"Oh, yes. I don't want them to know that I am alive, not just yet. I'll fix up something."

When the stage came in that morning the Chinese cook they had been expecting came in with it.

He was a likely looking fellow for a Chinese, and after questioning him a little, Wild came to the conclusion that he would do.

He had been highly recommended by a man in Denver in the Wild West Mining and Improvement Company was doing business with, so after the amount of wages had been fixed Jack turned the job over to the Celestial.

The new cook brought a good supply of clothing with him, and as Wild noticed this it suddenly struck him that if he was going to put on a new disguise, he might rig himself up as Chinese.

The cook's name was Wing Wah. He could speak English about as good as the average Chinese, which is not saying great deal, and Wild soon got in conversation with him.

The first thing he did was to impress it on the fellow's mind that he must not say anything outside to any one concerning his bosses, their business, or even mention how many there were living at the house where he did the cooking.

"Me understand velly good," he said.

"All right, Wing," replied Young Wild West. "Now, I want to ask a favor of you."

"Me do flavor allee light."

"I want you to let me have the use of a suit of your clothes for a few days."

The Chinaman looked astonished.

"Want puttee on Chinaman's clothes?" he asked.

"Yes. I want to make out that I am some one else."



"Me no understand."

It took the boy about half an hour to beat it into his head, but he finally did so.

He got the Oriental costume, and Wing even loaned him a real queue, which had been cut from a "frend" of his by a mob in Frisco.

"I guess I can make a good enough Chinaman to pass by lamplight, anyhow," observed our hero as he took the things to his room.

When he came out, half an hour later, he was made up to perfection.

"They look about alike, I reckon," said Jack, as Wild went to the kitchen and stood alongside the cook.

"As sure as you live they do," nodded Jim.

"Say, boys," exclaimed Wild, "I think I'll take a walk over to Cheyenne Charlie's and tell him that some one over here wants to see him. I want to see if he could recognize me."

"A good idea. Go on."

Wild at once set out on the errand, stumping along in the coden shoes, which pinched his toes just a trifle and made him walk all the more like the character he was assuming.

Cheyenne Charlie was just about leaving home to go over to business when Wild came up.

The scout was talking to his wife, and he did not see any one coming till he heard him speak.

"Velly fine day," observed the supposed Chinaman, with a polite bow.

"The deuce you say!" exclaimed Charlie. "Where in thunder did you drop from?"

"Me cookee for Young Wild West."

"Where did you see Young Wild West?" Charlie asked, after a pause, during which Wild did a whole lot of bowing and smirking to Anna.

"Me see in Denver, allee samee."

"You did, hey?"

"Yes."

"You lie, you Chinees! He ain't been there!"

Wild was now getting closer to Charlie's wife all the time, and the scout was getting as mad as a hornet.

Suddenly he made a savage kick at him.

But, instead of being struck, Wild stepped nimbly aside and tapped the scout's foot, upsetting him very gently.

Then, thinking the farce had gone far enough, he broke into a laugh in his natural voice.

Charlie got up, feeling very sheepish.

"You beat ther deck, Wild!" was all he said.

"What do you think of this rig?"

"It is great. I would never have known the difference, yet thought there was something peculiar about your voice."

"Well, the English tourist has left town, and there are a couple of Chinamen in his place, or rather one, for we won't hunt the cook as being in it."

"So your cook has arrived, then?"

"Yes. He came this morning."

"An' you got ther things to fix yourself up with from him?"

"Exactly."

"I never saw anything like it before," said Anna, as she came close to Wild and looked at him sharply from head to foot.

Then all three laughed.

"Well, I guess, since my disguise seems to be so perfect, I shall go over to the post-office and have some fun with Arietta."

"Hanged if I don't go down, too, to see the fun," said Cheyenne Charlie to Anna, as Wild turned the corner. "I'll drop in just in time to see the climax."

The disguised Wild walked boldly into the office, not noticing the many grins and remarks that were let loose upon him by the miners.

"Letty for Wing Wah?" he asked.

"No," replied Arietta, shaking her head to make him understand thoroughly that there was not.

He bowed and winked a couple of times and then walked aside.

As he did so, a big fellow, who was known to be a rank ward, caught hold of the pig-tail and nearly pulled it loose from its fastenings.

Wild let out a yell in good imitation of one of the race that was representing, and the man laughed uproariously.

But the laugh ceased almost instantly, for with a lightning-like movement the supposed Chinese wheeled around and struck him a heavy blow with his fist, felling him to the ground.

"Wing Wah no fraidee Melican man; he learn boxee in Denver. Heolay for Chinaman!" yelled Wild in a shrill voice.

A small crowd had gathered as soon as the supposed China-

man came in sight, and when they saw this turn of affairs, the men were delighted.

Nearly every one of them was ready to fight for the celestial now.

When the big fellow got up and drew his revolver, some of them started to interfere.

But they soon found their services were not needed, for Wild had the man covered before he could raise his shooter.

"Wing Wah know how to shootee, allee samee Melican man," he said, quietly.

"You almond-eyed heathen!" roared the discomfited man. "I—I——"

"Dlopee gun, or Chinaman shootee!" was the reply.

Down went the revolver to the ground, and then, amid the jeers of the crowd, the fellow slunk from the spot like a whipped cur.

Wild bowed smilingly right and left, and then went into the post-office again.

"Wing Wah wantee kiss," he said to Arietta.

Then something happened that even surprised him.

The girl thrust the muzzle of a revolver under his nose so quickly that he could hardly believe his senses.

"The laugh is on me, Et," he said in a low tone in his natural voice.

Arietta caught on immediately, and put away the revolver.

"What will you be up to next?" said she, and then as some of the miners were coming in, she was forced to change the subject.

"Who did you say you wanted letters for?" she asked in a loud voice, so every one might hear.

Wild pulled out a card of the Wild West Mining and Improvement Company and handed it to her.

"Oh, you are the new cook over at the Widow's Claim Mine, are you?" she asked.

"Yes. Me cookee for Mister Jim and Mister Jack. Young Wild West in Denver."

She gave what mail there was for the concern, and then out came our disguised hero as calmly as though he was on mere pleasure bent.

He made his way back to the house, much pleased with the result of his exploit.

"Wing," said he to the cook, "I'll guarantee that you will be treated right when you go out. You have made a very good impression on the residents."

"Bully, allee samee!" was the reply, though he did not understand what was meant by good impression.

After thinking the matter over, Young Wild West came to the conclusion that he would wait a few days before he bothered the gamblers.

He wanted to let them go on and see just what they were up to.

The sinking chair in their den was a puzzler to him, and he wanted to wait and see if any one disappeared mysteriously.

If such a thing happened, it would be pretty certain that they were victims of the death-trap, especially if they were frequenters of the resort.

A week passed by.

Nothing had happened of any account.

The gamblers were doing a rushing business, their place being filled every night.

Meantime the pretty trapeze performer had recovered from her illness sufficiently to sit up.

Jim Dart was a constant visitor now, and the girl's eye brightened every time she saw him coming.

One day, when she was able to take a walk, Jim told her that he loved her, and she promised to be his wife when they both were old enough.

It was about this time that Young Wild West played another card in the game he was playing with the gamblers.

He walked down to the post-office in his old familiar way, without a particle of disguise on!

## CHAPTER X.

### THE GAMBLERS ARE ASTOUNDED.

Wild had got tired of laying low, and that was why he resolved all of a sudden to make his appearance in town.

One of the richest miners in Weston had mysteriously disappeared the night before, and that was sufficient to make Wild think that the gamblers had put him out of the way, after robbing him.

The vile resort was the last place he had been seen in, though the proprietors stoutly affirmed that he had left there shortly after midnight.

Young Wild West had been missed greatly in the town, and



when he showed up as suddenly as he disappeared nearly two weeks after, there was much excitement and rejoicing.

The miners came to him in flocks to grasp his hand.

In answer to the question, "Where have you been?" he would invariably reply: "Denver."

Wild had to pass the gambling-place to get to the post-office, and when he came along in his usual free-and-easy manner, who should be standing in front of the place but the three owners themselves!

"Good-morning, gentlemen!" said Wild, as he halted for a moment. "How has business been since I have been away?"

"First rate," answered Sterling, with something like a gasp. "Your sudden appearance in town surprised me. I had an idea that you—"

"That I was dead," interrupted Wild.

"Oh, no!"

"Oh, well, if you had, you can see how mistaken you would have been. It takes a good deal to kill me. I bear a charmed life, you know."

"Was—was there much doing over in Denver?" faltered Lev Sharp, for want of something to say.

"Lots. That is a big town, you know. I was not there long enough to see it thoroughly; it takes so long to go and come."

When Wild had walked on the three villains went inside the building.

"What do you think of that?" gasped Banks, who was as pale as a ghost.

"I don't know," came the answer from both men.

"Go and call the fellows who were so sure they threw him over the cliff that night."

Sterling went upstairs and came down a few minutes later, with the men at his heels.

As they had been up all night they had taken the daytime to sleep in.

Both were the picture of blank dismay.

"What have you got to say for yourselves?" demanded Sharp.

"Are you certain it was him?" blurted out one of them.

"If that was Young Wild West we took out of the cave in the hillside and drove off with, he is rotting at the bottom of a chasm over six miles from here!" exclaimed one of them.

"Well, it was him all right; but he ain't rotting at the bottom of no chasm, just the same. He says he has just returned from Denver."

"Maybe it is his double who has just come from Denver," ventured Banks.

"No doubt about it. It is Young Wild West," persisted Sterling. "He was never thrown over any precipice, that's certain."

The two gamblers who had been awakened drew their revolvers instantly.

"That means that we are liars, Bill!" one said to the other.

"Put up your shooters!" cried Banks in alarm. "We mustn't quarrel among ourselves."

"I'll take back what I said," said Sterling. "But I must say that I can't understand it."

"None of us can't," observed the fellow called Bill.

"If that is the same fellow that we tossed over the cliff, I have got an idea that we ain't got very long to stay around these diggings," said Bill to his companion.

"It is either he or both of us that has got to die!" exclaimed the other.

"Get him into the back room and drop him through the floor. That will put an end to him!" remarked Sharp.

"Who will attempt to do that?" queried Banks.

"I will!" spoke up Sterling, quickly. "I guess that is our only way out of the difficulty. If we can make him disappear that way, I'll guarantee that he'll never come back."

"How will we get him in here?"

"Oh, the chances are that he will drop in and break the faro bank before to-morrow morning. It is just like him, from what I have heard of him."

"Well, if he does, you take him into the back room and show him what we have built since he went away."

"I'll do it, never fear." And Sterling knit his brows and shut his lips tightly together.

Pete Sterling was right when he said he thought it was a sure thing that Young Wild West would pay them a visit before the next morning.

Darkness had hardly set in that evening when the daring young fellow walked in.

A minute or two later who should step in but the English tourist, who had been missing for several days.

The gamblers shrugged their shoulders and felt uneasy.

This was the only man who knew their secret.

The two newcomers had scarcely got around the green cloth when Cheyenne Charlie and the Chinese cook entered.

This was a combination that the gamblers did not like.

They knew what sort of persons Young Wild West, Cheyenne Charlie and the tourist were, and they had heard what the Chinese had done in front of the post-office on the morning of his arrival in town.

Sterling sat behind the table, dealing the cards.

"If there is any difference between us two, we will draw it," the tourist whispered in his ear. "I came back from Spondulicks to-night to try and break your bank; that is why I am here for."

The gambler breathed a sigh of relief.

"You haven't said anything, then?" Sterling asked in a low tone.

"If I had you would have heard of it, wouldn't you?"

"That is so."

"I am all right, as far as that line of business is concerned, but I am here to break your bank, if I can."

"You are welcome to break the bank, if it lies in you to do it," said Sterling, in a tone loud enough for every one to hear.

"I came here with the intention of doing that myself," marked Wild, stepping up closer and taking a suit of diamonds.

Then he laid a hundred on the ace.

Cheyenne Charlie and the Chinaman also joined in the game.

The former placed twenty-five on the queen of spades and the latter chose the nine of hearts, putting ten on it.

All three won, the tourist losing.

The game continued for a couple of hours, the majority of the players losing.

But the four principals were ahead as a whole, Wild being the winner by nearly a thousand.

Presently old man Murdock entered.

He caught the eye of Wild, and then, after buying a drink, went out again.

Wild played for a high stake the next deal and lost.

"I guess I have had enough of it for to-night," he said, with a yawn. "I'll come in some other time and put the bank of business."

There was considerable emphasis in the remark, but no one appeared to notice it.

Sterling got up, and Sharp took his place.

"You haven't seen how we have got our place fixed up, Mr. West," he said. "Suppose I show you the poker room."

"All right," was the reply. And Wild followed him into the back room like a lamb going to the slaughter.

"Take a seat and we will have a smoke," said Sterling, sitting down himself and pressing a bell that was on the table. Young Wild West sat down.

The next minute both he and the chair sank through the floor!

"At last!" exclaimed the villain, as one of his accomplices entered the room with a box of cigars. "He didn't even so much as utter a cry."

The waiter's hands trembled slightly.

"How are we going to account for his disappearance?" queried. "There is that tourist out there, you know."

"That fellow is all right, I think," replied the gambler. "If he attempts to say anything, why, there'll be a general row started and he'll be the first to go under, that's all."

The waiter went back with the box of cigars, and a few minutes later Sterling came out of another door.

"Where is Young Wild West?" asked Cheyenne Charlie, suddenly.

"I don't know," retorted Sterling, with affected surprise. "I left him lighting his cigar in the back room a few minutes ago. He said he was going home."

"Oh! Maybe he went out when I wasn't looking."

Pretty soon the Chinaman gave up playing and went out. Cheyenne Charlie and the tourist kept right at the game.

Neither of them were losing anything, and they were really infatuated with it.

A quarter of an hour passed.

Then the Chinese came in to play some more.

"He's been home to get some more dust," observed Cheyenne Charlie.

He began putting up his bets on the jack of clubs.

He won three times in succession, doubling each time, and then the dealer stopped him.

"You are in too much luck, you heathen, to double up a



ore," he said. "I can't take anything larger than a thousand-dollar bet now; the bank won't allow it."  
 "Allee lightee," was the bland reply. "Chinaman takee new rd this time. He bettee thousand dollars on king of clubs." Much to Sharp's dismay, the king of clubs turned up! After he had won about eight thousand dollars, he turned to the dealer and said:  
 "Wing Wah velly lucky; he bet you that the ace of hearts come up first this time."  
 "How much will you bet?" Sharp asked, chewing his muscle in a nervous manner.  
 "Twoce thousand dollee!"  
 Sharp hesitated for a moment and then turned over the top rd.  
 It was the ace of hearts!  
 "Who are you, anyhow?" cried Sharp in a rage.  
 "Young Wild West, at your pleasure!" and off went the adgear and pig-tail, disclosing the daring young fellow's atures to the startled gamblers.

## CHAPTER XI.

### CONCLUSION.

Before ever starting for the gambling resort, Young Wild West laid a plan that he hoped would be the means of putting the finishing touches to the gamblers.  
 Old man Murdock and Dove-Eye Dave were sent for, and they were assigned to important parts.  
 "I'll tell you what I want you people to do," said Wild. "I want you to take a spade apiece and go behind the gambling n as soon as it opens. Dig down about four feet, on the ght side near the corner, and you'll be on a level with the llar floor."  
 "Then pry off a couple of boards and you will find some sort a pit with a chute leading to it from the floor of the build- g. Now, listen, and make no mistake! What I want you to is to lift the end of that chute out of the pit and let it rest the floor of the cellar. Can you do this?"  
 "I reckon we kin," replied Dove-Eye Dave, "if no one stops from working."  
 "Well, when you are sure that you have done it, you must me around inside the place and give me a wink. By doing at, you will let me know that it is all right; and then in short time I'll come down the chute in double quick time. I want you to be right there in the cellar when I do come, you can give me a hand, in case it is wanted. Do you thor- ghly understand what you have got to do now?"  
 The old men said they did, and Wild thought that he could pend on them.  
 After having once more impressed on their minds what they re to do towards breaking up the gambling den, he turned his three pards.  
 "Jim," said he, "you will please rig yourself up as the tour- ; and you, Jack, will fix yourself up as the Chinese. Charlie ll remain just as he is."  
 "We will all go down to the gambling place to-night, and if m not mistaken, we'll win the game."  
 When Young Wild West accepted the invitation to go into back room with Pete Sterling he did so, knowing that the lar had been dug into and the chute taken out of the pit ut he knew was there.  
 When he felt the chair sinking beneath him, he simply let uself go.  
 But there was a certain feeling of horror that it might not right after all, so when his feet struck the sandy floor of cellar a feeling of relief came over him.  
 "Hist!" exclaimed a voice near him.  
 "It is I—Wild," he quickly retorted.  
 "Good enough," whispered the voice of Dove-Eye Dave, and the next instant he was seized by the ankles and pulled out the chute.  
 Murdock was outside on the watch, and he quickly told them t it was all right.  
 Wild wanted to see Jack, who was disguised as Wing Wah, soon as possible.  
 A soul had shown around the rear of the building, so he two old men said, so Wild went behind a little clump of es and began removing a portion of his clothing.  
 A couple of minutes Jack came around, and he was at e directed to the clump of bushes.  
 "Are you alive?" he asked Wild.  
 "Yes. That was a very easy thing to do. It couldn't have ecked nicer."  
 "I shouldn't like to have tried it," replied Robedee, as he to removing his Chinese rig hurriedly.

"Well, I guess we have got all the proof we want to put the finishing touches on those fellows. Just fix my hair and fasten that pig-tail on."  
 Jack helped him, and soon the disguise he had worn was upon Young Wild West.  
 Then it was that Wild went back and started in at faro again and had such great luck.  
 He was waiting to give a grand denouement to the affair, and nothing could have been better than when Sharp asked him who he was.  
 When he answered, Jim, who was right at his side disguised in the tourist rig, yanked his headgear off, and the hands of Young Wild West went up with a revolver in each.  
 The gamblers were thunderstruck!  
 "Gentlemen!" exclaimed Young Wild West, addressing the crowd, "I accuse the men—Banks, Sterling, Sharp and the rest—of being murderers! They have a death-trap in this house, and in it are two bodies of their victims."  
 In the twinkling of an eye the crowd seized the gang, and then, under the direction of Cheyenne Charlie, they were bound hand and foot.  
 It was generally a case for Judge Lynch, and that was what it was going to be this time.  
 Young Wild West was quite sure that such would be the case when he made the accusation, but he was bound to do all he could to stop it.  
 He got upon the gambling table, and in a clear, concise way told all he knew about the gamblers and just what had hap- pened to him.  
 Then he invited them into the back room and showed them the trap-door that had dropped two men to their death.  
 It did not take them long to find out that what Young Wild West said was the truth, to the very letter.  
 Then half a dozen went for ropes to hang the scoundrels with. Wild tried to stop them.  
 "They should have a fair trial," he said.  
 But it was no use.  
 The ropes were soon procured and the now enraged mob hustled them outside.  
 There was a convenient oak near by which had a number of limbs branching from its sturdy trunk.  
 Once more Young Wild West implored them to give the men a trial.  
 But an angry roar from the crowd was the only response.  
 Banks, the ex-showman, was the first to go up, and he went with a shriek of terror on his lips.  
 The rest were game to the end, only one asking for mercy.  
 The next morning the men of Weston went to their various duties just the same as though nothing had happened.  
 The next afternoon Wild and Arietta and Jim and Eloise took a ride over the mountain on horseback.  
 Our hero had promised to show them where he had been thrown over the precipice by the two villains.  
 When they had reached the place he explained the whole occurrence in detail, and even Jim shuddered.  
 The tears were in Arietta's eyes.  
 "Oh, Wild," she exclaimed, "why are you so rash and im- petuous? When are you ever going to give up intertering with evil men?"  
 "It is my way. Et, and I can't stop it."  
 Arietta said no more.  
 "And how about you, Jim?" asked timid little Eloise.  
 "I voice the sentiments of Wild to a T," was the reply.  
 "Well, we will hope that nothing will happen very soon to get you in danger again."  
 "That would be too good to be true," spoke up Arietta.  
 "I think so myself, little one," laughed Wild. "I hear that the Sioux are getting very troublesome again, and the first thing we know we will be shut off from even Spondulicks."  
 "You are not going to interfere with the horrid red demons, are you?" questioned Eloise.  
 "If duty calls me, I will not shirk it," was the reply. "The Government must have scouts, you know."  
 "Well, we will hope you are not called."  
 And so they rode home, hoping and happy.  
 But stirring times were ahead for Young Wild West and his friends, which we will tell of in the next number.

Next week's issue will contain "YOUNG WILD WEST'S BEST SHOT: OR, THE RESCUE OF ARIETTA."

SEND POSTAL FOR OUR FREE CATALOGUE.



## CURRENT NEWS

Friends of Frank Wiroski, head of Erie detective force for the Huntington-Chicago division, says he bears a charmed life. After a thrilling revolver battle with car thieves, he found ten bullet holes in his clothing, but he escaped unhurt. Wiroski surprised ten men who were stripping an Erie freight car in the Griffith yards. He opened fire on them and in a running battle thirty shots were fired. The thieves escaped.

The new French 4-inch gun for attack on aircraft has proved to be a very efficient weapon. It fires a projectile weighing about 36 pounds with a muzzle velocity of 1,870 feet per second. The sighting is by means of a panoramic glass and the gun-pointing is done similarly to that of the well-known French 7.5 gun. The carriage remains fixed, the gun recoiling to a distance of one meter and returning to battery by means of compressed air. The weight of the piece in action with its armored screen is about two and one-third tons.

One of the most interesting parts of the cargo of the transport Thomas, which left San Francisco on Feb. 5, was thirty or forty tons of provisions for the German colony at Guam. The colony is composed largely of the officers and crew of German warships that are interned at Guam. As there is only a small colony of white people at Guam, it is imagined that the increase in its population by the enforced stay of the Germans has created a shortage of provisions. The Thomas is due to arrive at Guam on Feb. 26.

According to the last published figures of the Office of Naval Intelligence dated July 1st, 1914, when the new vessels which at that time were under construction, are completed and in commission, the United States navy will have dropped from third to fourth position in respect of total tonnage. The order will be Great Britain, 2,714,106 tons; Germany, 1,306,577 tons; France, 899,915 tons, and the United States, 894,889 tons. Since the war started, Great Britain, Germany and France have greatly accelerated construction, and probably the United States navy is further behind France in tonnage than the above figures indicate.

Pembroke Decatur Gwaltney, known throughout the country as "The Peanut King" and a millionaire, died at his palatial home at Smithland, near Norfolk, Va. Returning from the civil war, Mr. Gwaltney saw the possibilities of developing the peanut business in this State, and was the pioneer in establishing great warehouses and securing the co-operation of the farmers in marketing the nut. Later he branched into the manufacture of peanut products and quickly made a fortune. He was the head of the Gwaltney Corporation and interested in all of the larger peanut factories in the State at the time of his retirement, two years ago.

If ever the disarmament of the world occurs there will be several countries that will not have much to do in that line, such as, for instance, Monaco, the army of which comprises 75 guards, 75 carbineers and 20 firemen, say Tit-Bits. Another diminutive army is that of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, which numbers 135 gendarmes, 170 volunteers and 30 musicians. The Republic of San Marino can put in the field a total of nine companies, consisting of 950 men and 38 officers, commanded by a marshal. The army on a peace footing consists of one company of 60 men. The fighting force of the "Black Republic" (Liberia) is composed of 700 men and almost a hundred officers. Liberia, however, evidently considers its army a formidable one, since, upon the occasion of hostilities between any of the powers, it always issues a proclamation of neutrality.

Sprint and endurance races will be on the program of the spring roller skating carnival which will be held at Madison Square Garden, New York, on March 16, 17 and 18. As yet the management has not decided on whether it will conduct a twenty-four-hour race or adhere to the original plan of holding a fifty-hour team race. A majority vote of the starters in last year's race will be taken and the decision made later. It is practically assured that Jack Woodworth, Willie Blackburn, Arthur Launey, Frank Bacon, Freddie Martin, Roland Cioni, Billy Yal and the others who started in the twenty-four-hour grind last winter will compete in the spring event, no matter what the distance it. Besides these American stars, the management is trying to get hold of any European skater who are not mixed up in the war. The entry list for the amateur races is open now with the Roller Skating Carnival Committee at Madison Square Garden.

When Edith, the three-year-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ernest E. Wehmeier, of Aurora, Ind., became seriously ill and cried for her papa, the mother, Mrs. Edith Schwab Wehmeier, notified her husband, from whom she had been separated, and a reconciliation took place beside the bed of the sick child. The Wehmeiers separated after a quarrel. Mrs. Wehmeier caused her husband's arrest on the charge of assault and battery, desertion and failure to provide, and then filed a petition for divorce. Wehmeier was fined \$50 and costs on the assault charge and was bound over to the Dearborn county circuit court on the wife and child desertion charge. While held in the county jail he professed religion and signed a pledge never to drink intoxicating liquors again and friends obtained his release on bond. When the cases against him were called he locked arms with his wife and went before Judge Warren N. Hauck, explained his troubles, and the judge consented to the motion of Willard E. Dean, prosecuting attorney, to dismiss the cases. After paying the costs in the divorce suit, Mr. and Mrs. Wehmeier left the courtroom together.



# The Fate of Philip Funk

—OR—

## LEFT IN THE LAND OF FIRE

By "PAWNEE JACK"

(A SERIAL STORY)

### CHAPTER I.

#### THE NIGHT ALARM IN THE STRAITS OF MAGELLAN.

"It's terribly cold, Tom. Don't you want my cardigan jacket, boy?"

"No, no, George. Why should I take your jacket and deprive you of it? I'm not that sort of a fellow, I hope."

"I'd rather be cold myself, Tom, than see you cold, any day in the week."

"Now, now! You stop that, George Meacham! I know it is very unselfish of you and all that, but I won't have you make a girl or a baby of me. I'm just as well able to rough it as you."

"Look alive, there! Look alive! What's the matter with you fellows? Are you frozen there?" a stentorian voice roared from the deck. "We have to make the turn of that cape inside of ten minutes. Every sail must be furled or we are on the rocks just as sure as Nature made little apples. You, Tom Hall! I'm a-talking to you! Take hold of that there line with both hands! That's a two-handed job, I want you to know! What in thunder kills you? Have you gone to sleep?"

This roaring and bellowing was Joel Topham all over. The mate of the California clipper ship E. W. Sutton, from New York bound for San Francisco, was one of those fellows who labored under the idea that the more noise he made the better the men obeyed him, a proposition which was very doubtful, to say the least.

The time was a certain cold, windy night a lumber of years ago in the days when the California clippers—and the ships they were, too—still found it profitable to make the long voyage "around the Horn," as it was called, whether they went through the Straits of Magellan or actually made the longer passage around the stormy cape. There was nothing peculiar about the Sutton except her age, her crew, her captain and her mate.

This ought to be enough, one might say.

It was enough—or almost enough to send her to the bottom a dozen times over during her long run down the South American coast.

In the first place the Sutton was one of the oldest clippers in the service—a regular "coffin ship," one of the kind on board of which the carpenter has to spend most of his time patching up leaks in the hold.

Her cargo was any old thing Captain Zed Bowers could pick up at low freight whenever he could find a merchant willing to trust his goods in the rotten craft.

The crew were about the same as the cargo—a lot of "haymakers," "bums," trash too poor even for the Water street crimps who ran the sailors' boarding-houses in those days. Captain Bowers had refused to deal with the crimps, and had picked them up himself.

That they were entirely inefficient goes without saying, but this did not seem to trouble Captain Bowers much. He was a mild-mannered little man, about "knee-high to a pint of cider," as Tom Hall's friend, George Meacham, put it.

He used to keep half full of New England rum the most of the time, and it was but seldom that he was seen on deck.

Everything was left to Joel Topham, the mate, a thorough sailor, and a tough nut in every respect, who did nothing but swear and roar, and bellow at the men all day long.

And so it will be seen that the party shut in by the wooden walls of the E. W. Sutton was anything but a happy family.

The only really respectable fellows among the crew were Tom Hall, a country boy of eighteen, and George Meacham, a young sailor of some twenty-five years, who had already made two trips around the Horn.

Ten o'clock that night saw the wind blowing a fierce gale, accompanied by one of those terrible sleetstorms so common on the Patagonian coast.

It was Tom Hall's watch below, and in company with George Meacham, the young sailor who had taken such a tremendous liking to the boy, he sat by the little stove in the forecabin trying to get a bit warm before turning in for the night.

These were pleasant times for Tom, the pleasantest of the whole day.

The other sailors of his watch used always to tumble into their bunks or hammocks, scarcely stopping to loosen up their clothes or to pull off their boots, but George always liked to sit by the fire and chat a while, to smoke his pipe and spin yarns of his previous voyages, and George could spin good ones, for he had been following the sea since he was fifteen years old.

"Yes, Tom," remarked the young sailor, stuffing his pipe full of navy plug and lighting it. "Yes, you may



depend upon it. I am right. The old man means to go through the straits, which at this time of the year is just as dangerous as it can be. Just fancy our being wrecked on either shore! It's the Patagonian giants on the north, who would make slaves of us and run us up into the interior, and the Land of Fire on the south, with those terrible Fugian dwarfs, who are about as near animals as any race of human beings in the world."

"Tell me about them, George," said Tom, leaning his elbows upon his knees and his chin upon his hands. Do they ever attack ships?"

"Indeed, they do. Many a ship has been wrecked by them, and the crew murdered to the last man. There is no slave-making with the Fugian dwarfs. They kill you outright, and many people claim that they are cannibals, and I believe it, same as all sailors do who know anything about them, although books will tell you that it isn't so. Anyhow, they are the fiercest people in the world, and scarcely any one has ever ventured to land on Terra del Fuego and escaped alive. I tell you, Tom, that a million dollars cash down would not induce me to land there, knowing what I do."

"Why do they call it the Land of Fire?" asked Tom. "I think that's what the name of the island means."

"Yes, that's what it means."

"I suppose there are volcanoes there?"

"Well, no, I believe not, although it used to be believed that there were. The natives are in the habit of building great fires on the rocks to lure ships on the ledges, so they can rob them. They always do that when they see a ship going through the straits, and heaven help the craft which falls into their clutches, as I said before."

"Do you really think there is any danger, George?"

"No, no! Not at all. Don't be scared, Tom."

"Oh, I'm not scared. I'm only thinking. There's no danger with Topham in charge. Rough as he is, he understands his business. If it was the skipper, now, that would be altogether another thing. I don't see how he ever got his master's certificate. He's the queerest card I ever struck yet."

"That's what he is, George. But what is he always poring over those papers for in the cabin? Night after night I have watched him down through the skylight. He seems to be too drunk to fully understand what he is doing. He'll have his rum bottle and glass alongside of him and work away at them for a while; then tumble asleep, and his head goes down on the table. Pretty soon he'll wake up again and go at it harder than ever. I watched him that night of the storm off Rio; he kept it up till near morning. You were not on my watch then. I could see him talking to himself, and one time I got down and put my ear to an opening in the skylight, and what do you suppose I heard him say?"

"What?" asked George, eagerly. "Tom, I'll tell you right now what I have been meaning to tell you for some time. There is a mystery on board this ship, and I know it. Out with it, boy! Tell me what the old man said."

"Why, as near as I heard it," replied Tom, "it was Philip Funk! Philip Funk! Heaven, deliver me from the fate of Philip Funk!"

"There!" cried George. "I knew it! It is the yarn I told him that's turned his head."

"All hands on deck! Ahoy, below there, ahoy! Light on the starboard bow! Tumble up! Tumble up, every mother's son of you, unless you want to pay your duty to Davy Jones!"

## CHAPTER II.

### THE ATTACK BY THE FUGIAN DWARFS.

Tom Hall was one of the "haymakers," of which there were more than too many on board the E. W. Sutton.

In other words, Tom was a country boy, who had never been to sea before, who even yet scarcely knew the main brace from the bobstay, and in the eyes of Joel Topham, the mate, was too stupid to learn.

"Out of the way, you young puddin-eater! If you can't help, at least keep out from under my feet!" roared Mr. Topham, nearly stumbling over Tom as he went charging down the deck.

"Slide, Tom!" whispered George. "Keep close to me, lad, and you will be all right."

It was certainly no time for haymakers, and, to a certain extent, Mr. Topham was justified in kicking Tom out of the way, although the boy only wanted to do the best he could.

The situation was really very serious, and we must pause to explain.

For reasons of his own, Captain Bowers, instead of going around Cape Horn, as was customary at this season of fog and storm, had decided to make the shorter, but highly dangerous, passage through the Straits of Magellan.

Outside the entrance to the straits the wind had held, but the Sutton had scarcely entered the straits when she ran into a dense fog, a condition of things which prevails there for weeks together at times.

To "bunt ship" and stand out to sea again would have probably been the wisest move, but Mr. Topham had been positively forbidden to do this by Captain Bowers, and, indeed, he had the best of reasons of his own for wishing to remain in the straits.

What he did try to do was to secure a good anchorage, and while sounding for this, and allowing the Sutton to drift, he was suddenly startled by a great burst of fire shining through the fog over toward the Terra del Fuego shore.

Mate Topham was no fool.

He knew what that meant well enough.

The Fugian dwarfs were at their old trick, and had started this false beacon hoping to lure some ship upon the rocks in the fog, and the worst of it all was the Sutton was likely to prove the victim, for she had already been caught in one of the many strong currents which abound in the Straits of Magellan.

It was "hoist all sail" now, for the wind was beginning to rise, and this sent the crew aloft in lively style.

George saw to it that Tom had a place beside him, and he helped the boy with his work, which need not be particularly described.

(To be continued)



# ITEMS OF INTEREST

## GARBAGE COLLECTING MOTOR WAGONS.

Recent information about the municipal household waste collecting vans which are used successfully at Paris, states that these vehicles have a capacity of 360 cubic feet in the large box body, and in spite of this large stowage, the top of the box body is only 5 feet from the ground, so that loading in material is done with great facility. The box or garbage holder is of soft steel plate and on the top is a set of arched sliding covers. When at the garbage consuming plant, the whole body can be lifted off the truck for dumping purposes. A "Fram" electric front truck drives the car.

## FIVE-CENT POSTAGE TO GERMANY.

Postmaster Morgan called attention recently to the effect of the war on the postage rates charged for letters to Germany. Following the establishment of the two-cent rate between this country and England, Germany also set up a two-cent rate. But this was only on letters traveling by steamers proceeding direct from this country to Germany.

Until direct service is resumed, letters for Germany must pay the regular postal union rate of 5 cents for the first ounce or fraction thereof. However, letters which are not sufficiently prepaid will be permitted to go forward, but when delivered will be chargeable with double the amount of the deficiency in postage.

## AT 48 HE BECOMES LAWYER.

An ambition to be a lawyer that has possessed John J. Morse, of St. Louis, since boyhood, was gratified recently when he was admitted to the bar. He was presented in Judge Grimm's court by Loomis C. Johnson. Mr. Morse is forty-eight years old and married. He was connected with the St. Louis Car Wheel Company for eighteen years, the last five of which he was general manager, later becoming secretary and manager of the Southern Wheel Company. Since his early boyhood he says he had had a desire to be a lawyer. He studied at the Benton Law School, and passed the State bar examination after eleven months' preparation. The course generally is three years. Mr. Morse will be associated with John D. and Loomis C. Johnson in the National Bank of Commerce.

## PAID A GHOST'S DEBTS.

An amazing story of an old woman's superstition came before Judge Drummond at Balieborough, County Cavan, in the course of an action brought by Miss Anne Brady against a local farmer named Connell.

The plaintiff said that in June last the defendant told her that the ghost of her brother Phil, who had been dead twenty-six years, was haunting him because he forgot to pay defendant 20 shillings he owed him. The witness was frightened and paid the money, which the defendant swore on "the poker and tongs" was due. The defendant said he, after Phil died, walked nine miles to the wake

to see if he could get an opportunity of mentioning the debt, but he was not given a chance. He denied having said anything whatever about Phil's ghost. His honor, in giving judgment, said he firmly believed the story.

## PLOWING BY ELECTRICITY CHEAPER THAN HORSES.

From experiments which have been conducted of late near Florence, Italy, it is reported to have been demonstrated conclusively that electric plowing has a direct advantage over all other mechanical methods of tilling the soil, says Popular Mechanics. The small initial cost of the needed equipment, the low maintenance charge, and the efficiency derived from the energy consumed are cited as the points contributing to the success of the process. The work is done by a stationary apparatus consisting chiefly of a motor-driven capstan and hauling cable. The running arrangement is composed of a truck hauling disk plows, which cut to a depth of between 18 and 20 inches, and which will plow approximately 89 acres before it is necessary to change the position of the stationary plant. The cost of the work, with the power rate set at about 5 cents a kilowatt hour, was estimated to be about one-half that of plowing the same area with horses, and two-thirds the expense of steam plowing.

## ADVERTISING FOR A WIFE.

George Bodenhamer, widower, and one of the largest hog buyers, raisers and shippers in Baxter County, Ark., made an advertising contract with a local newspaper, in which he agreed to give the editor a prime fat, 200-pound hog next fall, if, through the advertising columns of the paper the editor secured for him a wife by that time. The editor, believing in the pulling power of his advertising columns, accepted the offer on the spot. Mr. Bodenhamer's specifications are very liberal. The requirements are that the wife must be under forty, healthy, a good cook and housekeeper, with a sentimental and lovable disposition. He will not object to a little temper, but does not want and will not have a spitfire, or one who has a nagging disposition. What he wants is a good woman who will make a pleasant and congenial home. If she has a little money to put into the hog business it will be acceptable, but it is not necessary. Mr. Bodenhamer owns a good 160-acre farm near this place that is well stocked with hogs. He also has cows, horses, etc. He has seven children, the oldest seventeen years and the youngest six years. On his side he agrees to keep plenty of rump steak and other provisions in the pantry and to maintain the home. He is not prejudiced against widows. He is not bad-looking, is forty years old, healthy, sober and a man of good morals and reputation. He gives as his reason for advertising for a wife that he is too busy to run around the country looking one up and going through a prolonged courtship. He is using advertising space as a short cut.



# DICKERING DICK

—OR—

## THE LUCKY BOY TRADER

By DICK ELLISON

(A SERIAL STORY)

### CHAPTER XVIII.

#### THE BOY TRADER'S EXTRA GOOD LUCK.

"Oh, yes, I know that lot. It has eight acres in it. What does he want for it?"

"He offers me the lot for a thousand dollars, but there is a mortgage on it for six hundred, and it's to be foreclosed. He is afraid that if it is foreclosed and sold at auction by the sheriff that there won't be much left over the mortgage for him."

"Yes, he is right about that. Really, the land is worth more than that, but it is unproductive, earning no income, and he is paying the taxes and interest on the mortgage. He has very little income himself. Do you know who owns that mortgage?" he continued.

"No, sir. I didn't ask him."

"Well, I do. Your grandfather, Deacon Morris, owns it, and he is calculating to buy it in for about the amount of the mortgage."

"Well, I didn't know that," Dick replied, somewhat surprised.

Mr. Brown advised Dick to buy the land and pay the interest on the mortgage.

"Oh, look here, Mr. Brown, I don't want to owe my grandfather a penny. Why can't I pay off the mortgage?"

"You can do so, if you wish. I understand it is now past due. If you haven't money enough, I will advance it to you."

"Thank you, sir. I have got money enough."

"All right. I would advise you to buy it. Some day the railroad will need it, or when you get money enough it would pay you to build a few cottages on it to rent. You had better go and see Lawyer Hackett and have him examine the titles, but I believe they are all right. I don't think there is a lot or an acre in or about Danbury with defective titles."

"Mr. Brown, will you buy it for me, so that I won't be known in it? I will give you the money and I don't want my grandfather to hear of it."

"All right. I will do so and then have the deeds made out to you."

"No, make them out to my mother," said Dick.

"That's right."

Twenty-four hours later Mrs. Doubleday was the owner of the eight acres of land just below the depot and it was not known until the deed was recorded in the county courthouse.

Then the announcement was made in the Danbury paper.

That's the way old Deacon Morris got hold of the news. He sent his wife down to the cottage to inquire about it.

"Yes," said Mrs. Doubleday. "Dick got Mr. Brown to buy the land for him."

"Well, dear, your father holds a mortgage of six hundred dollars upon that land, and he is very angry about it."

"Why, what's he mad about? Dick can pay off the mortgage any time that he wants him to."

"That isn't it, dear. He wanted to foreclose and get the land himself."

"Well, it is too late. Dick told me to say that I could pay the mortgage and interest due whenever my father wanted it."

"Why in the world don't you pay the mortgage on your home here?" the old lady inquired.

"Dick offered to, but Mr. Norcross said that he didn't want the money. He preferred to take the interest quarterly."

It turned out that just a few days after Dick bought the land the railroad company wanted it for its own use, and an agent went to Merchant Brown to find out what he would take for it.

Brown told him that he had bought it for another person and gave him the name of Mrs. Clara Doubleday.

He called on the widow, who, of course, referred him to her Dick.

He left word with her for Dick to call on him at his office and Dick did so the next morning.

To the great astonishment of the agent, Dick asked two thousand dollars for the property.

"That's all nonsense," said the agent.

"Maybe it is. I will get it or hold on to it."

"I guess you don't know anything about the value of real estate in Danbury," remarked the agent.

"Perhaps I don't," replied Dick, "but I am able to hang on to it, and I will get two thousand dollars for it or pay the taxes a good while."

Dick shrewdly estimated that if the railroad company wanted the property it would pay his price, for neither the road nor the land could be removed.

The man offered him two hundred and fifty dollars for his bargain.

Dick very promptly declined.

A few days later it was announced in the paper that an agent of a big mill was in town looking around for a site to put up a mill in Danbury.



Dick went to see him.

Said he:

"My mother owns eight acres of land just over by the railroad and it is just the place for your mill, for you won't have to build a track over two hundred yards long to get the benefit of the railroad."

"Yes, I looked at that property yesterday. What does your mother want for it?"

"Three thousand dollars," was the cool reply.

The man looked at him and asked:

"You don't mean that, do you?"

"Yes, sir. That is just what I mean."

"Why, I understand that it sold last month for only one thousand."

"Yes. That is what she paid for it. The land is not worth that to-day, but it will be worth ten thousand dollars inside of five years. It is right where the railroad can't get away from it. Danbury won't always be a little town like this."

"Well, we don't want to pay what land will be worth ten years hence. We want to pay what it is worth to-day."

"That's all right," said Dick. "If it will be worth ten thousand dollars ten years hence it will pay mother to hold on to it."

The man saw that it was good business sense and he made an offer of twenty-five hundred dollars for it.

"All right," said Dick. "There is a mortgage of six hundred dollars upon it."

"Never mind that. We will take care of the mortgage. Have your mother make out the deeds for twenty-five hundred dollars, and we will give her a check for that amount, less the amount of the mortgage."

The trade was made within twenty-four hours, and Deacon Morris fairly groaned over young Doubleday having gotten between him and such a splendid bargain as this.

The mill man immediately tendered the old man six hundred dollars for the mortgage, and, as it was overdue, he was compelled to take it.

After the trade was made, the railroad agent told the mill man that only two days before the lot had been offered to the company for two thousand dollars.

"That's where the company made a mistake in not buying it," was the reply. "That boy is a shrewd fellow. I don't know whether any one is at the back of him with advice or not, but I have found him to be right up to snuff."

"Yes," said the agent, "he is the shrewdest trader in this town, and he is not yet seventeen years old, I am told."

"Dick," said a citizen, "you ought to go into the real estate business."

"There isn't much trading in real estate in Danbury," he replied.

"Well, there will be when the mill gets started, for more houses will be needed. It will add nearly a thousand to the population. I understand the mill is to employ between three and four hundred operatives, and that will make about a thousand people, counting two or three to each family."

That gave Dick an idea.

He once more consulted Merchant Brown, who was him-

self greatly astonished at the splendid trade the boy had made.

"Now, Dick," said Brown, "see what you can buy the land back of the mill lot for. It's lying out in the woods, you know, just the place for a score or more of cottages to be built. The mill owners would rather have their operatives living in a little community to themselves than to have them scattered all over the town. You will have to hurry up or the owner of the land may do a little thinking himself."

"Who owns that land, Mr. Brown?"

"I really don't know. It used to belong to a man named Echols, who died four or five weeks ago, and I think the property was divided among his children. Lawyer Hackett ought to be able to tell you about it, for I believe he settled up the estate."

Dick at once went to Hackett's office, and through him learned that the land over there, a tract of about thirty acres, fell to one of the sons who was doing business in New Haven, Conn.

"I want the land, Mr. Hackett, and if you will buy it for me, I will pay you a good commission."

"Dick, I guess that it will cost you fifty or sixty dollars an acre."

"All right. I will pay for it and every dollar in cash."

"All right. I will see what I can do," said the lawyer, and he at once wrote to his former client, saying that he could sell the land at a pretty fair price if he wished to part with it.

The man replied that he would sell it for seventy dollars an acre.

Dick at once told him that he would take it, and the trade was made and the deeds made out to Mrs. Clara Doubleday.

"Dick, you're a lucky boy," said Merchant Brown.

"I hope I am, sir. But it took pretty nearly all my cash to get the land. Now, if you will help me out, I will begin at once cutting it up into building lots and streets."

"All right. I will help you out," and the merchant was as good as his word.

There was an old squatter on part of the land, who, when he heard that Dick had bought the property, said that he would have to pay him to get him off of it. Dick foresaw trouble with him, but he pluckily told him that he wouldn't pay him a cent and that he would have him ejected as an intruder.

The old fellow set his dog upon him, and Dick saw that he was in a worse dog fight than his grandfather had been mixed up in a year before."

## CHAPTER XIX.

### DICKERING DICK'S FIGHT FOR HIS LIFE.

The dog was a very large one and known to be quite fierce.

Dick had no weapon whatever with which to defend himself.

(To be continued)



## TIMELY TOPICS

A gander on the farm of Ollie McKinney, in Saw Mill Valley, Patton Township, Pa., is attracting much interest because of a peculiar growth, resembling a horn, on its head, about an inch above its eyes. The gander is about one year old. In two weeks from the time McKinney noticed the growth the "horn" grew one and one-half inches.

Letting out his prisoners to work for wages that go to their families instead of making them hammer stones, C. S. Whipple, Rock County sheriff, is demonstrating the possibilities of the Wisconsin commitment law. During the two years the statute has been in force \$16,775.85 has been earned by prisoners in this county. Of this amount dependents of paroled persons received \$10,376.81 and the county \$1,210.41. One man was paroled for a year to his wife to conduct a clothes pressing establishment.

Joseph Celi was sentenced to wash dishes for his wife for fourteen months by Judge Howard Weist in the Circuit Court, Flint, Mich. Celi pleaded guilty to a violation of the local option law. He told the court that he had been unable to get work for fourteen months. The court then asked his wife if he did any work about the house. She said that he carried the water and coal, but that he never helped her to wash the dishes. Celi was allowed his liberty on probation and must wash the dishes.

Carl Veeck, of Petersburg, Ind., owns a duck that serves as a watchdog. The duck was hatched with four legs, and soon became a great curiosity. Whenever strangers visited in the neighborhood of the Veeck home they always called to see the duck. The duck became so sensitive that whenever it heard any one coming it would run and hide. Despite its efforts to escape it was always caught. Then it changed its tactics and whenever any one approached it would begin quacking as loud as it could. Now, whenever any one passes or tries to enter the back yard at night the duck can be heard squawking all over the neighborhood. Veeck has refused all offers to buy the duck.

One fox was captured and six escaped in the annual fox drive in Northern Tippecanoe County, Ind., recently. More than 500 men and boys took part in the round-up. They all carried noise-making devices, but clubs, dogs and guns were barred. An immense circle was formed, covering an area nearly fifteen square miles in extent. All made for a given point in the center. Despite the vigilant work half a dozen foxes inside the circle managed to get through the line. At the round-up on the William Ross farm several boys finally ran the lone remaining fox down and captured it. An auction sale was held and \$50 was derived for charity. The women of the Pleasant Grove Church served lunch to the crowd. Farmers in the vicinity of the fox drive have been losing poultry for several weeks due to bites of the hungry foxes.

Postmaster Morgan announced the extent of the reduction of the force of the New York postoffice, which he had been forced to make on account of the unsettled business conditions created by the war and the resultant decrease in revenue. He will not dismiss any one, but he will transfer to the substitute roll and temporary list seventy-nine of the regular carriers. Transfers will be made in the case of the last seventy-nine appointed, and the postmaster is confident that they will be restored to the regular list within a year. Meanwhile they will substitute for absent regular carriers. Mr. Morgan believes that the efficiency of the collection and delivery services will not be impaired, as recent changes in the business and residential sections make it possible to rearrange schedules so as to reduce the number of men without injury to the public.

Alkali Ike, deputy sheriff from the desert, was a visitor in San Diego, Cal. Alkali was looking for the white lights. By noon, having failed to discover the excitement his soul craved, he made his way into the U. S. Grant Hotel buffet and, pulling a "forty-five" that looked like one of the Kaiser's howitzers, announced that he was going to do some "cleaning." As he swung his "Krupp" around the room heads dropped behind partitions, many faces paled at visions of sudden death. Commander-in-Chief Billie Schuler tipped his cigar to a higher angle than usual and, backed by Irish and Germans, advanced on "the bad man from the sandhills." For an instant visions of carnage flashed before the eyes of the men who had sought refuge, but it quickly passed, for Schuler annexed the cannon and threw Alkali Ike to the sidewalk. Half an hour later the fire-eater was back, begging with tears streaming down his face for his weapon. "I'll be on my way to the sandhills in five minutes," he promised as he got back his gun.

The chairman of the Liverpool Underwriters' Association, in his speech at the annual meeting, said that owing to the effective work of the British fleet the losses in the war thus far to British shipping had been much less than might have been expected. After six months of war, he said, the loss to the British mercantile fleet was estimated at \$30,000,000 to \$35,000,000. It had been estimated that the losses would be \$90,000,000 in the first six months. The chairman said that the year 1915 had opened badly, with a large number of very costly losses, the figures on the books of the association showing a total of \$6,500,000 as compared with \$3,500,000 for the corresponding period of last year. The insurance of hulls on time charters was in an unsatisfactory state, and, owing to the higher cost of labor and materials, which made a large percentage of premiums disappear in claims, concerted action had been taken to raise rates moderately. Referring to war risks, he said this part of the insurance business had brought very satisfactory profits to the underwriters.



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## GOOD CURRENT NEWS ARTICLES

Nearly all the moleskins used for making the fur garments that are now so fashionable are imported from Europe. But the Scientific American remarks that American farmers may turn the pest of moles into a source of profit, as the United States supply a skin actually superior to that of the foreign animal.

Electricity is being employed with success at a Detroit coke oven for the purpose of removing tar from artificial gas in the purifying process. The gas is passed through a highly-ionized field, which is produced by a high-tension discharge of current ranging as high as 80,000 volts, with the result that the tar forms in large drops, which are then easily separated.

Margaret Allison, aged eight, is one of the youngest printers in Nashville, Ind. Each evening, on her way home from school, she stops at the Democrat office, where she makes from 50 to 75 cents setting type at 20 cents a thousand. One galley of the type she set by hand in three hours. Mr. Allison, father of Margaret, is one of the fastest compositors in this part of the State.

E. H. Carter, of Wahpeton, N. Dak., has an old relic of bygone days in a Bible, published in Windsor, Vt., in 1812, by Merrifield & Cochran, at "The Sign of the Bible." This book is 103 years old. It was the property of a great uncle of Mr. Carter, who evidently had made an exhaustive study of the Bible, as was evidenced by the copious marginal notes and references in old-fashioned handwriting.

The latest novelty in the line of a receipt for goods was "sprung" on L. A. Beaudreau, No. 160 West Cotton street, Fond du Lac, Wis. A short time ago Mr. Beaudreau missed five members of his feathered family from the coop in his back yard, and all efforts to find the thief were vain. The latter, however, apparently had a sense of etiquette, for, upon opening his front door a few mornings later, the owner found a package containing the legs of the missing chickens, evidently a card of appreciation of the excellent meals lately served at the table of the night prowler.

Two light tenders at Point San Lucas, the southern end of Lower California, were saved from death by starvation recently by L. C. Hansen, first officer of the Pacific Mail steamer Newport. Hansen said he would take a line ashore. He rode breaker after breaker on a surfboard until he finally was cast up exhausted on the shore. Hansen was unable to move for several minutes and the two lighthouse men were too weak from lack of food to haul on the line that Hansen brought them. After a rest Hansen was able to heave in the line, which brought a double line from the boat, and to this was attached a series of life-buoys with the food made fast to them in water-tight cans.

## GRINS AND CHUCKLES

"And do you expect to follow in the footsteps of your father when you grow up?" asked the good man. "Naw," replied Tommy. "me fader is de legless wonder in de museum."

M. Crapaud—Ah! So zis ees your leetle son? He look to be similaire to you. Popley—Yes, he's very much like me. M. Crapaud—Ah! How do you call eet? "A cheep of ze old blockhead," ees eet not?

Jottery Jim—Wot's the good of cacklin' like a old woman? Why don't yer call a spade a spade and—Weary Williams—Wot? Not me. I've never been near enough to a spade to call it anythin', and don't mean to.

"Miss Ethel," he began, "or Ethel I mean—I've known you long enough to drop the 'Miss,' haven't I?" She fixed her lovely eyes upon him with a meaning gaze. "Yes, I think you have," she said. "What prefix do you wish to substitute?"

At a political meeting an excited Irishman rose to express his satisfaction. "Sit down!" called the man behind him, pulling at his coat-tails. "Don't you know you're opaque?" "And that I'm not!" cried the other. "I'm O'Brien!"

Robert was in the kitchen hammering away: "carpentering," he called it, and making a great deal of noise. When suddenly the noise ceased, mamma called out to him: "What's the matter, Robby?" "I hit the wrong nail," sobbed a stifled little voice.

Proud Mother—You will be five years old to-morrow, Willie, and I want to give you a real birthday treat. Tell me what you would like better than anything else? Willie—Bring me a whole box of chocolate creams, mother, and ask Tommy Smith to come in and watch me eat them.

Sammy was not prone to overexertion in the classroom: therefore his mother was both surprised and delighted when he came home one noon with the announcement. "I got 100 this morning." "That's lovely, Sammy!" exclaimed his proud mother, and she kissed him tenderly. "What was it in?" "Fifty in reading and fifty in arithmetic."



## THE BLUE DRAGON.

By Paul Braddon

Eleven centuries ago, where the city of Kamakura now stands, was a great lake, and down at the bottom of this lake lived a blue dragon, with emerald green eyes and a fiery mouth, who frightened the people to heart-sickness, because he lived on the flesh of little babies. He stole them whenever he could find them, cracked their bones, picked them clean, drank their blood and threw the dismembered skeletons on the shore of the lake, where weeping mothers in vain begged him to drown them also that they might forget their lost darlings' untimely fate.

Now, down by the lake lived Yoroti, a very rich man, who had sixteen children. He thought that even a dragon must respect so wealthy a person; and his wife could not persuade him to remove from the lakeside.

"He gobbles up the peasants' babies, this ugly dragon," he used to say, "but he will not touch the offspring of a man of high position."

The event proved that he was wrong. One day he returned home to hear his wife wailing, and his servants beating their hands together. The blue dragon had killed and eaten all his little ones, and their bones strewed the shore of the lake. Completely crushed by this calamity, all his pride was gone. He gathered up the remains of his little ones and carried them away to a miserable desert place, covered with sand and unsheltered by a single tree. Here he buried them, and the peasants called the spot the Rich Man's Burying Place. There he spent his time bewailing his loss; and he began to feel sorry for the peasants, whom heretofore he had despised, believing them to be clods, to whom such things happened because they did not feel them as more delicately-bred persons would.

One day, while he was weeping and watering with his tears the sixteen cactus plants in the mounds beneath which he had laid the ashes of his children's bones, he heard a strange cry, and, looking upward, saw a cormorant hovering over him that said:

"Rich man—rich man, are you sorry for the peasants now?"

And Yoroti bowed his head, and answered:

"Yes, I am sorry now."

Then the cormorant spoke again, and said:

"Rich man, would you save these peasant children if you could?"

And Yoroti answered:

"Yes—yes; I would save them if I could."

Then suddenly the cormorant changed into a beautiful winged woman and stood before him, and a strange light shone around her, and he fell on his face, afraid in her presence.

But she spoke to him kindly.

"Rich man," she said, "arise. If you would save the peasants' children, you can. Your wealth is great, and the blue dragon loves gold and jewels. Return to the lakeside, dwell there with your wife, and on that day of the week on which the blue dragon comes for a child, go to him and offer in its stead a handful of gold or a jewel.

Do this each week until all is gone, and so prove your devotion to your fellow-sufferers. Meanwhile, for every tear of grief you save another I will shed one of gratitude to water the plants that grow over your children's graves."

Yoroti listened and obeyed. He kissed the pale-green plants, and departed for his home.

His wife and servants were overjoyed to see him. When they heard his purpose, they marveled, but no one attempted to interfere. They told him that the dragon had grown so bold that he entered homes and took a child from its mother's arms, and they saw him depart for the shore, on the first morning, with great terror, for no one could tell when this dragon might begin to eat men.

Yoroti stood at the lakeside while the villagers watched him from afar, and his wife beat her hands together in terror; and the blue head of the dragon was lifted above the water, and the emerald eyes were fixed upon him. Then he spoke.

"Blue dragon, I come to speak to thee."

And the blue dragon answered:

"What do you wish?"

"I am a rich man, whose sixteen children thou hast eaten," said the rich man, "and I am come to offer thee a handful of gold for every child thou wilt spare. When the gold is gone I have jewels, emeralds, rubies, diamonds, pearls. Thou shalt have them all."

The dragon listened and consented.

"But remember," he said, "when I come to land I shall snort aloud three times. If the third time passes, and thou comest not, I shall take a child."

Yoroti agreed to this, but he knew the dragon's art, and that he hoped in this way to get gold and child-flesh too.

And now began a life of watching and fatigue. The dragon now came to the surface at least five times oftener than before. Even when he slept Yoroti always desired his wife to watch, and on the first snort of the dragon to awaken him; and he wore the fee the monster required for each child over his heart that there need be no delay.

That awful sound, as though the caves where evil beings dwelt were burst open, aroused all the dwellers by the lake. They clasped their children to their hearts and trembled, but at the second cry they always saw Yoroti, the rich man, running from his home to the shore, and the blue dragon retired appeased to his lake again. And so it continued until all the money and jewels that Yoroti had possessed were gone but one great emerald. He could save one more child; no more.

The peasants by this time adored him. The priests prayed for him. His fame had spread far and wide. But, alas! his power would soon end. All were in despair. He stood on the shore, with the jewel in his palm, and he besought the dragon to take it and to leave the peasants henceforth in peace. The dragon only laughed.

"When I have snorted thrice, if I have not my fee, I will have a child," he said, and retreated to the lake.

The emerald caught the last glow of the setting sun as he sank beneath the water; and all was despair beside the Lake of the Dragon. On the other side of the lake was a mountain. Upon its hither side Yoroti went to bewail himself. And he prayed aloud, crying:



"Let me be taught how to save my poor peasants from the grief I have known."

And he heard a cry, and saw the cormorant hovering over the lake.

"Push the mountain into the lake," were the words it uttered.

"I cannot move the mountain," said Yoroti, sadly.

"Believe that you can and see," said the cormorant.

And Yoroti had faith, and extended his arms and pressed against the mountainside and cried:

"Drop into the lake, oh! mountain, and crush the dragon."

And the mountain moved slowly, and all saw it; and instantly it vanished into the lake. The water splashed all about, drenching every one, and they fled; but when they recovered from their amazement, behold, the lake was filled up, and the dragon buried beneath the mountain forevermore; and a beautiful figure in white, with wings, stood by Yoroti's side, and said:

"Go, now, and take thy wife to the place they call the Rich Man's Burying Place, and see how I have watched thy plants."

Yoroti obeyed. Together the two sought the desert spot, and found that a little garden had sprung up there. Sixteen cactus plants, each bearing a great red flower, waved and nodded their heads toward them, and as they advanced the flowers burst open, and from each sprang the figure of a child—their own little children, as well and beautiful as ever, each bearing in the shawl it wore pearls and diamonds beyond price, and gold enough to make Yoroti a rich man again.

Then he returned to his people and was forever beloved by them and always happy. The blue dragon was never heard of again, and Kamakura was built upon the spot where the dragon's lake had been.

### THE MANIAC SKIPPER.

The ship Eden, of five hundred tons, cleared from London on the 15th day of October for the port of Valparaiso. She was well found in all respects, had an ample crew and good officers, and was rated high in point of insurance.

But as to the cargo of the Eden, perhaps the least said is the better. It was certainly not what one was about to cross the ocean in her would choose, as her manifest showed that she had over one hundred and fifty tons of gunpowder in her hold.

The Eden got out to sea and lay her course under the most favorable circumstances, and for the first twenty days had promise of a prosperous voyage. There was a drawback, to be sure, in the somewhat variable temper of the captain, who had a passion for sending the whole watch aloft, though there was nothing to be done, and then piping up the watch below to take their place on deck.

Three weeks having transpired, the eccentricities of the captain seemed to increase. He grew terribly profane, and would swear at the men without the least cause, until he foamed at the mouth, knocking them down with handspikes, and resorting to every species of violence.

About a month after leaving port all hands were aroused to an exciting and tragic scene. Hastily summoned on deck by the frantic cries of the watch, the now thoroughly alarmed crew gathered around the captain's skylight to witness a sight calculated to fill them with horror.

The captain had set his cabin on fire, and in the midst of the flames and smoke could be dimly discerned, dancing about madly, firing his revolvers and uttering shouts of demoniac glee. The man was raving mad.

A situation more desperate could not be invented by the most fruitful imagination.

There was a full crew in midocean, on a ship loaded with gunpowder, already in flames, and in command of a maniac, armed to the teeth.

The second mate and the carpenter were ordered to break in the cabin door and secure the lunatic. But they were received with a perfect volley of shots, wounding the mate and driving back the carpenter.

Whatever was done must be done quickly, or all would be sent heavenward together.

Now came another frightful discovery. It appeared that the captain, with diabolical cunning, had prepared for this great bonfire by first saturating the various parts of the ship with paraffin oil.

This discovery was the climax. All were at once disheartened—the vessel could not be saved.

The mate ordered the boatswain to pipe all hands to the boats, and he determined to quit the ship.

As they were lowering the first boat, the lunatic captain appeared upon the deck.

He had a bayonet in one hand, and a pistol in the other, and charged upon the men who were lowering away the boat. Two men fell, seriously wounded, by his hands, then the mate, following close upon the captain, knocked him down with a handspike, and disarmed him.

The boats were then lowered, and a few provisions and a cask of water put into them.

"Bear a hand, men, or we shall all be blown up," said the mate.

Everything was done as quickly as possible.

The captain utterly refused to go into the boat.

"Tie him hands and feet," said the mate.

"Aye, aye, sir!" responded the men.

He was quickly bound and laid in the bottom of one of the boats.

"Shove off, men, and pull for your lives," said the mate.

The men gave way with a will, straining every nerve to pull away from the ship.

"Pull, I say; pull for your lives!" shouted the mate.

Ha! the powder at last!

The boats seemed to be lifted far out of the sea, and for a moment every one was blinded by the spray and smoke.

The good ship Eden had disappeared.

Fortunately, after floating about all that night, they were discovered and picked up the next day by an English vessel, but their crazy captain was necessarily put in irons.

Four days subsequently he managed to creep upon deck, and, springing from the taffrail, he sank to rise no more.



## NEWS OF THE DAY

Atchison, Kan., has two men, both past eighty years of age, who never wear spectacles when they read. They are J. C. Scheibe, aged eighty-eight, and William Armstrong, Sr., eighty-two years old. Both men are among Kansas's earliest pioneers now living and are remarkably active for their age.

The Panama Canal has been open for public use six months. The total of the tolls collected since the opening has been a trifle more than \$2,000,000 to date. In January ninety-eight vessels passed through the canal, forty-four going west and fifty-four going east. Altogether they carried cargoes aggregating 500,000 tons.

To make the monster cheese that New York State will exhibit at the Panama-Pacific Exposition took a whole day's supply of milk for twenty-five cheese factories—106,000 pounds in all. The cheese is more than six feet in diameter, nearly five feet high and weighs between five and six tons. The mould in which it was made was built up of galvanized iron hoops.

Telephonic communication between Philadelphia and San Francisco was inaugurated Feb. 11 over the Bell system by three taps of the Liberty Bell, the sound of which over the wire was the signal to a bugler in the far Western city to play "The Star Spangled Banner." The strains of the national anthem were distinctly and clearly heard by two hundred persons who held receivers to their ears in this city.

Members of the German Alliance, in Evansville, Ind., are selling iron rings at \$1 each for the benefit of the widows and orphans caused by the war in Germany. In Chicago more than 22,000 of these rings were sold at \$2 each. The selling of the rings is a custom handed down from the days of Napoleon the First. Then the wealthy women of Germany sold their gold and jewelry to swell the war fund. They bought iron rings instead.

John Bignose, an Indian living on the reserve, Tower, Minn., is the champion wolf hunter of this district. He captured a half dozen of the brutes. The forest is full of wolf tracks, but the animals are wary, and to attempt to capture them is to pit one's self against their superior cunning. Poison fails to work, and a set trap is about the only means of taking them. The recent restoration of the bounty to \$7.50 by the commissioners, supplemented by \$7.50 from the State, together with about \$5 for the fur, makes the capture of a wolf a sufficient incentive to wage a warfare on these forest robbers.

When George Wachtel, a mechanic, of West Hoboken, N. J., went to work the other morning he left his wife worrying because she had an appointment with a dentist.

When he returned late in the afternoon he found her on the floor of the living-room, a bullet-hole in her forehead and a deep slash in her right wrist. A small rifle and a carving knife were nearby. After Dr. Philip Erivitz had attended her, Mrs. Wachtel was taken to the North Hudson Hospital, where it was said she could not live. She is thirty years old. Wachtel told the police that his wife had several teeth extracted recently and that more were to have been extracted. He said that she had complained of the pain and had said she didn't see how she could bear to go to a dentist again. The police recorded the case as attempted suicide.

The discovery has just been made in the central portion of the French Congo of a race of pygmies hitherto totally unknown. The members of the race are said never to surpass 1.5 meters, about 4 feet 9 inches, in height. According to *La Revue*, they live entirely isolated in the territory of Mongimbo. They build huts of hemispherical shape in the forest in groups of from 5 to 30. The chief is an old man who exercises absolute and hereditary authority and elects his own successor. They follow a curious custom as to food, the women subsisting on edible roots, while the men live on the products of the chase. According to a legend among them, the former are descended from a hedgehog and the latter from a toad. They have vague notions of good and evil and have a certain cult of the dead, whom they inter with much piety. They are valiant in the defense of their liberty and independence.

The smallest boy scout in the world lives at Blue Springs, Mo., just a little way from Kansas City. His name is Arthur Portwood. He is exactly twenty-nine inches high and weighs thirty-five pounds. Arthur is fourteen years old and in the sixth grade in school. He is the Tiny Tim of the Blue Springs Boy Scouts and goes with them on all their hikes. "Course, sometimes they carry me," he explained gravely; "my legs are so short I can't keep up with them when they go fast; but they always take me with them, and I attend every meeting." His size does not bother Arthur a bit. He is not at all sensitive about it. When a visitor entered the room where he sat in a baby's rocking chair by the fire, intent upon getting every mouthful from a big Jonathan apple, Arthur immediately stood up. "I expect you want me to stand up?" he said sedately, and rose from the little chair. "Most folks want to see how big I am when I stand up, you see." "Well, Arthur," said a friend, "I expect you'd like to have me give you a sack of nice candy, wouldn't you?" "Just use your own judgment about that, sir," said Arthur quickly. "I certainly would appreciate the candy, if you choose to present me with it." Which indicates his care in language and his appreciation of his friends and what they do for him.



## INTERESTING ARTICLES

### MAKES COUNTERFEIT COINS IN CELL.

Edgar Houldcroft, who was released from the Ipswich Jail (Mass.) after serving a sentence for drunkenness, was arraigned before a Federal commissioner on a charge of passing counterfeit coins, and admitted having made them in his cell. Houldcroft carried a money belt in which were a large number of quarters and nickels. In his pockets were found two moulds which he utilized in his cell at times when he was supposed to be making ornaments.

### STOLE TO BE A LAWYER.

Pleading that his reason for stealing a bicycle with two companions was the desire to secure money for another law book, Frank Regine, a bootblack, of Paterson, N. J., had the sympathy of the court. The boy pleaded guilty to the charge.

"What have you to say?" asked Recorder Carroll.

"Please, judge," said Regine, "I only did it to get money for another law book. Gee, it must be nice to be a lawyer and wear nice clothes and do as you please."

Recorder Carroll decided to encourage Regine and permitted all three to go after they promised to pay \$1.50, the amount realized from the sale of the bicycle.

### FUSES FOR EXPLOSIVES.

Fuses, such as are used for setting off charges of dynamite in digging subways and tunnels, and for explosive shells in warfare, are prepared very simply in several different ways. One old form was made by soaking a loosely-wound cord for ten minutes in a boiling solution of acetate of lead. Another form is a cotton cord impregnated with chromate of lead.

The fuse invented by Bickford in 1831 consists of a fine thread of black powder inclosed in three envelopes of thread, and soaked in pitch or rubber, according to the use to which it is destined.

One of the most commonly used fuses to-day is made by letting a fine stream of black powder run from the small end of a funnel into an envelope of hemp, thick but not much twisted, the powder falling in as fast as the hemp is twisted. This tube is then inclosed in a mesh of fine cotton, twisted in the direction opposite to that in which the hemp was twisted. The whole is held together with glue or pitch. This is very flexible and burns at the rate of one centimeter a second.

### SCHOOL FOR WAR CRIPPLES.

A school in which mutilated soldiers may learn suitable trades and employments is the latest scheme of M. Malvy, the minister of the interior, who recently made the announcement that part of the National Convalescent Institution at St. Maurice on the Marne, founded by Napoleon III. in 1857, will henceforth be devoted to the instruction

of soldiers prevented by the loss of limbs from following their former trades.

The Petit Journal publishes an interview with Dr. Bourrillon, director of the St. Maurice Institution and one of the promoters of the idea, who says:

"We have 900 beds, with 200 more at the Vacassis annex. I purpose to begin immediately the construction of the workshops, etc., required for the instruction, which will be individual and suited to each case of mutilation. I cannot yet say how far the institution will support the totally disabled, but I can assure you that this point has not been ignored in our plans."

Commenting on Mr. Malvy's announcement The Intransigeant calls attention to the cardinal feature of the treatment of the mutilated—that there is in France great scarcity of artificial limbs, most of which have hitherto been imported from Germany. The Intransigeant hopes that official efforts to supply the deficiency will take precedence of the less pressing question of instruction for future employment.

### TO FORM 24-MILE LAKE.

A dam 50 feet high that will flow the west branch of the Penobscot River back twenty-four miles and merge three lakes in one is to be built this spring by the Great Northern Paper Company at the head of Ripogenus Gorge, a narrow, rocky chasm, through which the river flows, or rather tumbles, for three miles between perpendicular cliffs 100 feet high, with a drop in that distance of more than 200 feet.

Before anything could be done toward the construction of this dam it was necessary to build a highway through the wilderness from the shore of Mooshead Lake at Lily Bay to the gorge of Ripogenus, which begins at the foot of the lake of the same name, as in no other way could the cement and other materials be transported to the site. Two years have been occupied in building this road. The dam will create a lake twenty-four miles long and nine miles wide, swallowing up Ripogenus, Chesuncook and Caribou lakes and flowing out great tracts of timberland.

It is estimated that 40,000 to 60,000 horsepower can be developed at the gorge, but the dam is to be constructed primarily for the purpose of increasing the water storage capacity of the west branch. The company that is to build the new dam already has created storage at Chesuncook Lake by means of a timber dam, estimated at 10,000,000,000 cubic feet, which will be increased by the new dam to 24,000,000,000 feet, while at Twin Lakes, same distance below, there has been created a storage of 15,000,000,000 feet. Together, these storage basins will furnish a uniform flow throughout the year sufficient for the operation of the great pulp and paper mills at Millinocket and East Millinocket, where 1,200 to 1,500 men are employed and two thriving villages have grown up.



## DEVILINE'S WHISTLE.

Nickel plated and polished; it produces a near-piercing sound; large seller; illustration actual size. Price, 12c. by mail.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

## ROUGH RIDER DISC PISTOLS.

Made of nicely colored wood 5 1/4 inches long. The power is furnished by rubber bands. Ten discs of cardboard with each pistol. Price, 6c. each, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

## TRICK COIN HOLDER.

The coin holder is attached to a ring made so as to fit anyone's finger. The holder clasps tightly a 25-cent piece. When the ring is placed on the finger with the coin showing on the palm of the hand and offered in change it cannot be picked up. A nice way to tip people. Price, 10c. each by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

## THE HELLO PUZZLE

Can you get the ring off? This puzzle is the latest creation of Yankee ingenuity. Apparently it is the easiest thing in the world to remove the ring from the block, but it takes hours of study to discover the trick, unless you know how it is done. Price by mail, postpaid, 10c.; 3 for 25c.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

## TRICK FAN.

A lady's fan made of colored silk cloth. The fan may be used and then shut, and when it opens again, it falls in pieces; shut and open again and it is perfect, without a sign of a break. A great surprise for those not in the trick. Price, 35c. by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

## LINK THE LINK PUZZLE.

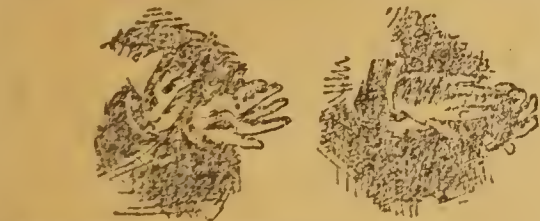
The sensation of the day. Pronounced by all, the most baffling and scientific novelty out. Thousands have worked at it for hours without mastering it, still it can be done in two seconds by giving the links the proper twist, but unless you know how, the harder you twist them the tighter they grow. Price, 6c.; 3 for 15c.; one dozen, 50c., by mail, postpaid.

FRANK SMITH, 383 Lenox Ave., N. Y.

## THE SURPRISE FOUNTAIN PEN

A novelty of the greatest merit! It looks just like a genuine fountain pen. But it isn't. That's where the joke comes in. If you take off the cover, a nice, ripe, juicy lemon appears. Then you give the friend you lend it to the merry "ha-ha." You might call it an everlasting joke because you can use it over and over again. Price, by mail, postpaid, 10c.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.



**APPEARING BILLIARD BALL.**—A solid billiard ball, beautifully made, can be made to appear in the bare hands with the sleeves rolled back to elbows. Very fine and easy to do. Price, 35c.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

## THE MYSTIC RING.



A Brand-New Trick, Just Out.—Puzzling, Mystifying and Perplexing. A metal ring is handed around for examination, and is found to be solid, unbroken japanned iron. A cane, a pencil or a string is held tightly at each end by a spectator. The performer lightly taps the cane with the ring, and the ring suddenly is seen to be encircling the cane. How did the ring pass the spectator's two hands and get on the cane? The most mystifying trick ever invented. Others charge 75 cents for this trick, but our price, including instruction, is 12c., postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

## JAPANESE TRICK KNIFE.



You can show the knife and instantly draw it across your finger, apparently cutting deep into the flesh. The red blood appears on the blade of the knife, giving a startling effect to the spectators. The knife is removed and the finger is found in good condition. Price 10c. each by mail.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

## THE GERMAN OCARINA.



A handsome metal instrument, made in Germany, from which peculiar but sweet music can be produced. Its odd shape, which resembles a torpedo boat, will attract much attention. We send instructions with each instrument, by the aid of which anyone can in a short time play any tune and produce very sweet music on this odd-looking instrument.

Price, 10c. by mail, postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

## FOUR WEEKS (A LOUD BOOK).



Has the absolute and exact shape of a book in cloth. Upon the opening of the book, after having it set up according to directions furnished, a loud report similar to that of a pistol-shot will be heard, much to the amazement and surprise of the victim. Caps not available; can be bought at any toy store. Price, 65c. by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.



they will be unable to open it. Price by mail, postpaid, 25c. each.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

## THE HIDEOUS SPIDER.



Fun for everybody with one of these handsome brutes. His body is 3 inches long, beautifully enamelled green, with white ridges, yellow speckles, bulging eyes, and a big red mouth. He is armed with six legs and two upright feelers, made of flexible spiral springs. A dark, invisible thread attached to his body lets you shake him in the air before your friends' eyes, when the legs wiggle in a most natural, lifelike manner. Guaranteed to make any lady howl and to scare the bravest hero on earth out of his boots. Price by mail, 10c. each.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

## THE FRIGHTFUL RATTLESNAKE!



To all appearance it is a harmless piece of coiled paper with a mouth-piece attachment, but upon placing it to one's mouth, and blowing into the tube, an imitation snake over two feet in length springs out of the roll like a flash of lightning, producing a whistling, fluttering sound that would frighten a wild Indian. We guarantee our rattlesnake not to bite, but would not advise you to play the joke on timid women or delicate children. Each snake packed in a box. Price, 10c.; 3 for 25c., mailed postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

## LITTLE CLINCHERS



With a pair of these creepers clinched on your shoes you can defy the slipperiest ice or snow. No matter how slippery the road or how steep the hill, these claws of steel will carry you safely over them. A child can adjust them in 30 seconds. No nails, straps, screws or rivets are needed. They will not injure your shoes. No need to remove them indoors—simply fold the heel-plate forward, reversing the spikes under the instep. They are comfortable, durable and invisible. Just the thing for postmen, golfers, hunters, woodsmen, brakemen, miners and all who would insure life and limb in winter weather. 25 cents a pair, postpaid.

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The holder of this pencil is beautifully nicked with grooved box-wood handle, giving a firm grip in writing; the pencil automatically supplies the lead as needed while a box of these long leads are given with each pencil. The writing of this pencil is indelible the same as ink, and thus can be used in writing letters, addressing envelopes, etc. Bills of account or invoices made out with this pencil can be copied the same as if copying ink was used. It is the handiest pencil on the market; you do not require a knife to keep it sharp; it is ever ready, ever safe, and just the thing to carry.

Price of pencil, with box of leads complete, only 10c.; 3 for 25c.; one dozen 90c. postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.



#### CHANGING MONEY TRICK BOX.



With this trick box you can make money change, from a penny into a dime or vice versa. Also make dimes appear and disappear at your command. Price, 10c. each by mail, postpaid.

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#### GOOD LUCK PUZZLE.



It consists of three horseshoes fastened together. Only a very clever person can take off the closed horseshoe from the two linked horseshoes. But it can be done in a moment when the secret is known. Price, by mail, 10c. each.

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Made of a regular corn-cob pipe, with rubber figures inside; by blowing through the stem the figure will jump out. Made in following figures: rabbits, donkeys, cats, chickens, etc.

Price, 10c., postpaid.

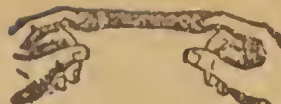
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**VANISHING COINS.**—A coin held in the palm of the hand is made to vanish when the hand is closed. Only one hand used. No practice required. Wonderful effect. Price, 25c.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

#### INDIAN FINGER TRAP.



A couple can be joined together and their struggle to be released only makes matters worse. It will hold them as tight as a rat-trap, and the more they try to pull away, the tighter it grips. Our traps are extra long. Price, 10c. each; 3 for 25c. by mail, postpaid.

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A comical toy with which you can have no end of fun. It consists of a cut-out figure fastened to a thread suspended between the ends of a spring. By pressing the wires between the fingers and thumb the figure will dance in the funniest manner. Price 10 cents each, by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

#### VANISHING PACK OF CARDS.



You exhibit a neat black card case, you request from the audience a ring, a watch, bracelet, or other jewelry articles. You propose to fill the case with a pack of cards. After doing so, the pack of cards disappear from the case, and the jewelry novelties appear instead.

Price, 35c. by mail, postpaid.

FRANK SMITH, 383 Lenox Ave., N. Y.

#### RISEING PENCIL.

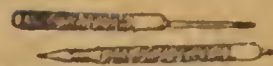


The performer exhibits an ordinary pencil and shows it top and bottom. The pencil is laid on the palm, the performer calling attention to his hypnotic power over innate objects. The pencil is seen slowly to rise, following the movements of the other hand. The witnesses are asked to pass their hand around it to assure themselves no thread or hair is used.

Price, 25c.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

#### JUMPING JACK PENCIL.



This pencil is made in a handsome style and looks so inviting that every one will want to look at it. The natural thing to do is to write with it, and just as soon as your friend tries to write, the entire inside of the pencil flies back like a jumping jack, and "Mr. Nosy" will be frightened stiff. It is one of our best pencil tricks and you will have a hard job trying to keep it. Your friends will try to take it from you. Price by mail, postpaid, 10c. each.

FRANK SMITH, 383 Lenox Ave., N. Y.

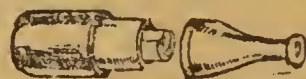
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Will fly on a horizontal line 150 feet! Can be flown in the house, and will not injure itself nor anything in the room. The most perfect little aeroplane made. The motive power is furnished by twisted rubber bands contained within the tubular body of the machine. It is actuated by a propeller at each end revolving in opposite directions. Variation in height may be obtained by moving the planes and the balance weight. It can be made to fly either to the right or the left by moving the balance side-wise before it is released for flight. Price, 25c. each, delivered.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

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A beautiful ebonized cigar holder that takes pictures. Every smoker who loves fun will want one to entertain his friends. We furnish with each holder material, all prepared, for making six different photographs, and guarantee every paper to produce a completely finished photograph if directions are followed. Directions—Take holder apart at the joints, roll up one of the small blank papers (six furnished with each holder) and insert it in the holder. Put the holder together and smoke a cigar for one minute. A beautiful finished photograph will appear on the paper, which can be taken out and preserved for years. Price of holder, with six blank pictures, 10c.; 3 for 25c. by mail, postpaid; extra blanks, 5c. per dozen.

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